12-MONTH DEVOTIONAL BOOK

Daily Direction

WITH

JESUS

MARK ALEX

DAILY DIRECTION

WITH JESUS

A 12-MONTH DEVOTIONAL BOOK

AUTHOR: MARK ALEX

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GET TRUTH GET LIFE MINISTRIES

Email: gettruthgetlife@gmail.com

Website: www.gettruthgetlife.com

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All credit for the writing of this book goes to God. I am grateful to God for giving me a supportive family and other supportive people around me. I thank Him for the rich inspiration from the Bible. I also thank Him for other Christian authors and preachers (who write and speak in accordance to the Bible) particularly Ellen G. White. I thank Him for the drive, passion and inspiration to write and complete this book.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to everyone who needs and wants to read it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 2

DEDICATION 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS 4

INTRODUCTION 11

JANUARY 21

FORGIVENESS 21

How does God forgive? 23

Why do we Find it Difficult to Forgive? 24

Does Forgiving Others Mean We Are Free to Disobey God? 28

Some of the Blessings of Forgiveness 32

Does Forgiving Mean We Should Not Tell Other People Their Errors? 39

How Should Christians Deal with Conflict? 41

Prayer 43

Activity 43

WHY DO GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO BAD PEOPLE? ENVY OF THE WICKED 45

Be Patient on God's Promises 50
Prayer 53
Activity 53
FEBRUARY 55
GOD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESULTS 55
Why Then Should You Put Effort? 57
How is Divine Power Necessary? 58
Prayer 61
Activity 62
GOD WANTS YOU TO PROSPER 64
Prayer 92
Activity 93
MARCH 94
NEVER WITHHOLD GOOD 94
Prayer 98
Activity 99
THE ESSENCE OF TITHE 101
Prayer 111
Activity 112
APRIL 113

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD 113
The Belt of Truth.....118
The Breastplate of Righteousness 120
The Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace . 121
The Shield of Faith..... 123
The Helmet of Salvation 126
The Sword of the Spirit..... 128
Prayer 131
Activity 131
LIGHT VS. DARKNESS 133
Prayer 144
Activity 145
MAY..... 146
BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP 146
Prayer 157
Activity 157
YOU SHALL COME FORTH AS GOLD..... 159
Prayer 163
Activity 163
JUNE..... 164

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ 164
Prayer 173
Activity 173
KEEP MOVING 176
Prayer 182
Activity 182
JULY 185
LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE 185
Prayer 192
Activity 192
THE EXTRA MILE 193
Prayer 197
Activity 197
AUGUST 199
CONSISTENCY IN OBEDIENCE 199
Prayer 205
Activity 205
ALL THAT HE HAS 207
Prayer 210
Activity 211

IN HIS HAND 212
Prayer 215
Activity 215
SEPTEMBER 217
OF THINE OWN HAVE WE GIVEN THEE..... 217
Prayer 220
Activity 220
TESTING THE HEART 222
Prayer 225
Activity 227
HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION..... 229
Prayer 239
Activity 240
OCTOBER..... 241
THE GOD OF OVERFLOWING BLESSINGS 241
Prayer 274
Activity 275
ATTRIBUTES OF GOD'S LAW 276
Prayer 286
Activity 287

SUCCESS LESSONS FROM THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS 288
Do Everything to the Glory of God 292
Do Your Best 295
Fear 298
Despising the Little 304
Elijah 307
Moses 308
Prayer 316
Activity 317
NOVEMBER 319
HOW TO MAKE A BLESSED DECISION 319
Prayer 332
Activity 333
A TEACHABLE SPIRIT 335
Prayer 340
Activity 341
GOD WANTS YOU TO TRAVEL 343
Prayer 357
Activity 357

DECEMBER 359
A GENUINE CHRISTIAN CAN NEVER FAIL 359
Prayer 373
Activity 374
ALL THESE WORDS 376
Prayer 380
Activity 380
THE SPIRIT BEHIND YOUR MUSIC 382
Prayer 390
Activity 391
BIBLIOGRAPHY 394

INTRODUCTION

Is there a day or a moment that you do not need Jesus? The answer is no. Whether you believe in Him or not you need Him. In the dedication section of this book, you can see that I have written, “I dedicate this book to everyone who needs and wants to read it.”

We live in a world where it is common to find people who don’t know what they need. It is also common to find people who don’t want what they need and want what they don’t need.

Some people think that they need a job while in essence what they need is Jesus. Others think that they need money to make them happy and when they get it, they still don’t understand why they are unhappy. They don’t realize that there is fullness of joy in God’s presence (Psalm 16:11). Despite having ‘everything,’ they can feel that there is a

missing piece but they don't know what that missing piece is.

I once saw a man approaching a lady in a certain YouTube video. I can't accurately remember the title to the video, the exact words nor the content creator behind that video but I can remember a little bit of what I'm about to share. The lady asked the man how he is going to benefit her. The man told her that he is going to lead her to Jesus. The lady responded by saying, "I don't need that (implying that she doesn't need Jesus)." The man responded by telling her, "You don't actually know what you need until you get it.

Many of us are like that lady. We don't actually recognize how much we need Jesus until we consciously meet Him and spend time with Him. Due to spending too much time on other things such as school, work and entertainment we tend to downplay our spirituality. Many Christians think of spirituality as a fraction of their lives.

We do not realize that our entire lives are spiritual. I once heard a friend in church saying that spirituality is just part of the thing but not the main thing. He used an absurd example to illustrate his statement. He said that spirituality is like onions and tomatoes or spices that are meant to add flavor to the main dish. He added by saying that when cooking one can do without the spices as long as they cook the right thing. He also said that one cannot cook the wrong thing with the right spices. Unfortunately that teaching is quite wide even among the teachers and spiritual leaders in churches.

For a long time, I was taught that one needs to grow spiritually, socially, mentally and physically. In other words, I was taught that all these are entirely different aspects of a person's life.

When I got deep into prayer and Bible study, I realized that life is spiritual. In other words, spirituality is everything. Spirituality is not the onions, tomatoes or spices, it is the

main dish. Spirituality is not the spare parts in a vehicle, it is the entire car.

The social, emotional, mental, physical, financial, political among other components are under the umbrella of spirituality. They are like the furniture and the home appliances while spirituality is the house that hosts them. You cannot buy them when you don't have a house to put them in.

Ever seen a person buying a television set and couches and putting them outside because he has no house to put them in? A person seeks shelter first before he buys the goods to put inside that shelter. What am I saying? LIFE IS SPIRITUAL. The deeper you understand this, the higher your level of success in life.

Genesis 2:7 tells us that God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breathe of life and man became a living soul. The God who created us and

the entire universe is Jesus (John 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:2, Hebrews 1:8-10, Colossians 1:16-17, 1 Corinthians 8:6). The life of every living thing is interconnected to Jesus because life flows from Jesus as Jesus is life (John 14:6).

“No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer.” – Prayer, Page 95.1, Ellen G. White. In other words, no man is safe for a day or an hour without communion with God. When Peter kept his eyes fixed on Jesus, he was able to walk on water (he did that which was impossible for man to do). When the Israelites looked on the bronze serpent on the pole, they received healing (Numbers 21:6-9). This is because that serpent represented Jesus (John 3:14-15). Jesus is the answer to all your questions. Jesus is the solution to all your problems. Jesus is the way and Jesus leads the way. Jesus is the only sure direction.

Jesus and His Word are one and the same (John 1:1). Whatever power Jesus possesses, His Word also possesses.

Sometimes I send devotional articles from my blog www.gettruthgetlife.com every day to people. When I don't, I consider myself to have failed in the course of evangelism. This is because the Holy Spirit told me that I need to do that because people need Jesus daily.

The weight of this responsibility keeps me on toes but it also gives me fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11) and peace that surpasses understanding (Philippians 4:7). Despite that it gives me numerous other blessings as well. I say that to encourage you to do the same in your line of calling.

How did I start writing for God? I have talked about it in my previous book, *A FAITH FUELED LIFE*. However, I can still say it again. A friend called Moses Nguma told me to be sharing God's Word on social media. I despised it at first.

When I got into deeper Bible study, I found the lessons that I was learning from the Bible to be so exciting that I could not help but share them with others. One person whom I used

to share them to is a lady from church by the name Esther Argwings who serves diligently in the Children's department in Nairobi South Seventh Day Adventist Church in Nairobi, Kenya.

We had the Vocational Bible Study. This is usually a one week children and teens program that various churches often have. The program often lasts from Monday to Friday or sometimes from Sunday to Friday and it gets closed on Sabbath. That week, through the grace of God, I was tasked with doing morning devotion for three days out of the five days.

One morning (it was probably on a Wednesday), while we were doing the morning devotion, I presented a devotional thought about how one cannot fail when they give themselves wholly to God. The devotional thought lasted for eleven minutes. At that time, I had not yet written it into a full devotional article.

After I presented it, Esther Argwings asked me, “Have you ever thought of writing a devotional book?” At that time, I never knew what a devotional book was because I had never come across one.

From that time I started thinking of writing a devotional book. Later on, I typed the article, “A GENUINE CHRISTIAN CAN NEVER FAIL,” and posted it on my blog: www.gettruthgetlife.com. The good news is that I have intentionally included that devotional article in this book. Why do I say, “intentionally?” This is because, according to the order that it appears on my blog, it is supposed to be in my next devotional book.

Most of the content of this book was written before most of the contents of my first published book *A FAITH FUELED LIFE*. The inspiration to write this book also came before the inspiration to write *A FAITH FUELED LIFE*. The interesting thing about all these is that *A FAITH FUELED LIFE* is my first published book while this is the second.

As I was almost finishing to reedit this book, one of my esteemed teenage mentees called Christian Barto told me to take my devotional articles and put them in an yearly devotional book (2 Corinthians 13:1, Hebrews 2:3-4, Mark 16:20, Genesis 41:32, Isaiah 44:26, Romans 15:8). That was a confirmation from God that I was doing the right thing. God loves to confirm.

I decided to do a 12-month devotional book because you need Jesus twelve months a year. I have included prayers and practical activities as well because a Christian life is not far-fetched as some make it seem to be. A Christian life is practical.

As I stated earlier, we need Jesus daily and because we need Him daily, I decided to give this book the title DAILY DIRECTION WITH JESUS. I debated with myself if I should use the word *from* or *with*. I chose to use the preposition *with* to symbolize a close companionship and an intimate relationship with Jesus.

My prayer is for you to get clear directions from God in your everyday life. I recommend that you take time to study this book, not just read it. Like the Bereans, while reading this book, you should diligently check with the Bible if those things are so.

May you receive the will and passion to study the Bible because whatever you are looking for is in the Bible. Failure to study the Bible is suicidal because the words of the Bible are the words of eternal life (John 6:68).

MAY THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDE YOU AS YOU STUDY THIS BOOK.

GOD BLESS YOU.

JANUARY

FORGIVENESS

KEY TEXT: *Matthew 18:32-33 (AMP) - "[32] Then his master called him and said to him, 'You wicked and contemptible slave, I forgave all that [great] debt of yours because you begged me. [33] Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave [who owed you little by comparison], as I had mercy on you?'"*

We shall focus on Matthew 18:21-35, The parable of the unforgiving servant.

In this parable, Jesus talks about a certain servant who owed the master 10,000 talents. The master prescribed that they should sell his belongings for that debt to be paid. The servant pleaded with the master, and the master forgave him. Later, the servant found a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii and told him to pay him what he owed.

The fellow servant could not pay and pleaded for patience with him, promising to pay. The servant did not hear the plea of his fellow servant and went ahead to throw him in prison. The other servants were so displeased by this act and told the master. When the master heard this, he was furious and delivered him to the torturers until he paid for everything, he owed to him.

In this lesson, we can see that:

- The master showed mercy on the servant despite owing him so much (10,000 talents).
- The servant did not pity the fellow servant despite owing him so little than what he owed the master. Comparing what the fellow servant owed him to what he owed the master is 1% or less.
- The servant expected the master to forgive him an enormous debt but could not forgive his fellow

servant a small debt. That is selfishness, wanting the best for yourself and not for others.

As Christians, we need to forgive as God forgives.

How does God forgive?

Micah 7:18-19 (KJV) – "[18] Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy. [19] He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

Jeremiah 31:34 (KJV) – "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

The two passages of scripture tell us that God forgives completely. Most humans forgive half-heartedly, while a part of our hearts still hold a small grudge against the person, we

say we have forgiven. True forgiving should be accompanied by forgetting. God forgives and forgets. Holding on to the wrongs someone has done to you is not forgiving, and it is difficult to forgive with a carnal mind. That is why we need to ask God to help us forgive anytime a person wrongs us.

Why do we Find it Difficult to Forgive?

1. We think forgiveness is for the weak.
2. We find it burdensome or impossible to figure out the other person's condition or situation.
3. We expect people to be and act like us, not considering that everybody is peculiar.
4. We feel that mercy cannot restore what has once been ruined.
5. Some people may have wronged us or caused us "trouble to the limit."

6. You forget how regularly God and fellow human beings have forgiven you (like how the servant forgot the master's compassion).

There is no limit to forgiveness. You need to forgive unlimitedly. There is no limit in keeping any of God's Commandments. God has said the seventh day is the Sabbath but this does not restrict you from spending time with God during the week. Keep the Sabbath day (Saturday) holy but feel free to engage with God as many times as you can during the week.

Matthew 18:21-22 (KJV) – "[21] Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? [22] Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

The Bible instructs us to condone every wrong done to us. It does not specify the wrongdoings that can be excused and

those that cannot. Many of us will find it smooth to forgive what we consider a minor mistake but cannot forgive what we consider a huge mistake.

These are some cases in which we may find it challenging to forgive others.

1. You are in a marriage, and you catch your partner red-handed cheating on you, or your spouse leaves you for no reason.

2. You are at work, and someone makes an erroneous allegation against you, causing you to lose your job, and have a household that depends on that job.

3. You are in a university where a professor despises you and has sworn to give you a failing grade whenever you take his or her class.

4. You discover your best companion, someone you trust, speaking evil about you behind your back and

doing things behind your back to ensure your breakdown.

5. Someone expects you to forgive them, but they cannot forgive you when you do something less hurtful than what they did to you.

6. You are a widow with five youngsters, and your relatives come and snatch all your inherited property away. Leaving you and your children destitute.

7. You are in marriage or courtship, and your partner constantly abuses you emotionally and physically.

With the carnal mind, it is impossible to forgive such errors, but with the aid of the Holy Spirit, it is going to be extremely flexible to forgive situations that are worse than the ones specified above.

Does Forgiving Others Mean We Are Free to Disobey God?

“But the teaching of this parable should not be misapplied. God’s forgiveness toward us lessens in no wise our duty to obey Him. So, the spirit of forgiveness toward our fellow men does not lessen the claim of just obligation. In the prayer which Christ taught His disciples He said, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” Matthew 6:12. By this He did not mean that in order to be forgiven our sins we must not require our just dues from our debtors. If they cannot pay, even though this may be the result of unwise management, they are not to be cast into prison, oppressed, or even treated harshly; but the parable does not teach us to encourage indolence. The word of God declares that if a man will not work, neither shall he eat. (2 Thessalonians 3:10.) The Lord does not require the hard-working man to support others in idleness. With many there is a waste of time, a lack of effort,

which brings to poverty and want. If these faults are not corrected by those who indulge them, all that might be done in their behalf would be like putting treasure into a bag with holes. Yet there is an unavoidable poverty, and we are to manifest tenderness and compassion toward those who are unfortunate. We should treat others just as we ourselves, in like circumstances, would wish to be treated." – Christ Object Lessons, Page 247.2, Ellen G. White.

As children of God whom He has created in His image, we should be able to see things as He sees them. We are always pleading to God to forgive us despite the magnitude of our errors, but we are not willing to forgive others for their minor errors.

"How many are today manifesting the same spirit. When the debtor pleaded with his lord for mercy, he had no true sense of the greatness of his debt. He did not realize his helplessness. He hoped to deliver himself. "Have patience with me," he said, "and I will pay thee all." So, there are

many who hope by their own works to merit God's favor. They do not realize their helplessness. They do not accept the grace of God as a free gift, but are trying to build themselves up in self-righteousness. Their own hearts are not broken and humbled on account of sin, and they are exacting and unforgiving toward others. Their own sins against God, compared with their brother's sins against them, are as ten thousand talents to one hundred pence—nearly one million to one; yet they dare to be unforgiving." – Christ Object Lessons, Page 245.2, Ellen G. White.

"In the parable, the lord summoned the unmerciful debtor, and "said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." "So likewise," said Jesus, "shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his

brother their trespasses." He who refuses to forgive is thereby casting away his own hope of pardon." – Christ Object Lessons, Page 247.1, Ellen G. White.

While Jesus was going to be crucified for the sins he did not commit, after being oppressed to the extreme, he said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"—Luke 23:34 (KJV). The most fascinating point is that Jesus stated this out of a pure heart. Most of us will say, "it's ok," or "I've forgiven him," but deep inside our hearts, we are hoping for the worst to meet our offenders.

When Jesus forgave, that action did not make him powerless, and it did not make him less of what He was. Mind due, after going through all that, He resurrected after three days. The individuals who scoffed, humiliated, and tortured Him were mere mortals. So, who was the bigger person? Was it Jesus or them? By asking God to forgive them, Jesus did not refrain from being the Son of God, and it did not stop Him from soaring to heaven after the resurrection. Therefore, you

must learn that nothing gets lost when you act right. In fact, God adds you more blessings since right doing is pleasing to God.

Any act of sin, no matter how small it is, its effects go a long way. A perfect example is Adam and Eve. The one sin they did has kept us in this mess for thousands of years (Genesis 3). An act of righteousness, no matter how small, also goes a long way. What does this mean? This means that unforgiving (an act of sin) can go a long way, and forgiveness (an act of righteousness) can go a long way. You may never know how huge your actions impact people.

Some of the Blessings of Forgiveness

1. Forgiving heals – Luke 5:18-20 (KJV) – "[18] And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. [19] And when they could

not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. [20] And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. Forgiving leads to purification of the spirit. It makes you become physically and emotionally healthier."

2. Forgiving helps rebuild relationships as it causes you to realize the other person's worth. Through forgiving, you can bless someone else.

3. Forgiving helps one to be more profitable in all that they undertake. Individuals are less effective because they constantly reminisce on what transpired to them in the past. Failing to forgive affects one psychologically, thus causing your productivity to be less than it should be.

4. Forgiving compels God to answer your prayers. Mark 11:25 (KJV) – "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

"We can receive forgiveness from God only as we forgive others. It is the love of God that draws us unto Him, and that love cannot touch our hearts without creating love for our brethren." – Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, Page 113, Ellen G. White.

When we embrace God's love, we will automatically be inclined to love our fellow men. The power of God's love is extraordinarily strong that it pulls us towards other people, and it pulls other people towards us more than any magnetic force can ever do.

The love of God in our hearts would compel us to do acts of kindness that we never thought we could before we

experienced it. We will be kind to those who hurt us. We will bless those who bless us, do good to those who cause us pain and forgive those who do not forgive us.

“After completing the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus added: “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:14, 15. He who is unforgiving cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults.” – Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, Page 114, Ellen G. White.

Normally, we wait for someone who has wronged us to come and ask us for forgiveness. We are to forgive those who have wronged us immediately after they have wronged us, whether they ask for forgiveness or not. When the wounds (they have caused us) are still fresh, and the pain is excruciating we should say from an earnest heart, “Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34).”

Let us not wait for them to come and ask for forgiveness for the carnal mind is full of pride.

Sinners tend to pull away especially after knowing the errors that they have made. The pride that is in their hearts does not allow them to say, “I’m sorry.” Thus, they lock themselves in their own cage of unrepentance. After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid themselves from the presence of God (the One whom they had wronged). As a child of God, it is your duty by the power of God to do your best to unlock them

from that cage. The first step in unlocking them from that prison is forgiving them.

“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:15. Nothing can justify an unforgiving spirit. He who is unmerciful toward others shows that he himself is not a partaker of God’s pardoning grace. In God’s forgiveness the heart of the erring one is drawn close to the great heart of Infinite Love. The tide of divine compassion flows into the sinner’s soul, and from him to the souls of others. The tenderness and mercy that Christ has revealed in His own precious life will be seen in those who become sharers of His grace. But “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Romans 8:9. He is alienated from God, fitted only for eternal separation from Him.” – Christ Object Lessons, Page 251.1, Ellen G. White.

Forgiving others is like a credit coin earned for you to receive forgiveness. You find it difficult to forgive your

neighbor because what they have done seems unbearable to you. What you do not realize is what you do is also unbearable to many others, and it is more unbearable to God because He is holy. We do not understand how what we consider a small sin harms a God who is holy, righteous, and perfect. If we did, we would forgive others just as He has forgiven us.

“We are not forgiven *because* we forgive, but *as* we forgive. The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God, but by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own. Wherefore Christ says, “With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Matthew 7:2.” – Christ Object Lessons, Page 251.4, Ellen G. White.

Does Forgiving Mean We Should Not Tell Other People Their Errors?

Matthew 5:23-26 (KJV) – "[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; [24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. [25] Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. [26] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

Jesus is telling us (the converted ones) to reconcile with our fellow human beings before we go to worship Him. Before you do any act of worship, ask yourself, have you forgiven the person who has made you angry? Before you return tithes and offerings, reconcile with your offenders.

Before you pray, reconcile with those who have wronged you. Before you sing songs to God, reconcile with those who have harm you. Before you study the Bible, reconcile with those who have hurt you. Before you do anything (as a Christian whatever you do to the glory of God is an act of worship), reconcile. Tell your neighbors about their errors and forgive them before you bring your gifts to the altar.

"But sin is not to be lightly regarded. The Lord has commanded us not to suffer wrong upon our brother. He says, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him." Luke 17:3. Sin is to be called by its right name, and is to be plainly laid out before the wrongdoer." – Christ Object Lessons, Page 248.2, Ellen G. White.

"In his charge to Timothy, Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, "Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Timothy 4:2. And to Titus he writes, "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers…. Wherefore rebuke them sharply,

that they may be sound in the faith." Titus 1:10-13." – Christ Object Lessons, Page 248.3, Ellen G. White.

How Should Christians Deal with Conflict?

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee," Christ said, "go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Matthew 18:15-17." – Christ Object Lessons, Page 248.4, Ellen G. White.

"Our Lord teaches that matters of difficulty between Christians are to be settled within the church. They should not be opened before those who do not fear God. If a

Christian is wronged by his brother, let him not appeal to unbelievers in a court of justice. Let him follow out the instruction Christ has given. Instead of trying to avenge himself, let him seek to save his brother. God will guard the interests of those who love and fear Him, and with confidence we may commit our case to Him who judges righteously." – Christ Object Lessons, Page 248.5, Ellen G. White.

Forgiving is not easy, but it is worth it. You may need to take a pen and a piece of paper, write down all the names of the people who have wronged you then pray over it. If you still feel heaviness in your heart against them, try to do some fasting till you forgive them completely.

Let us ask God to help us forgive as He forgives. I wish you all the best as you experience the blessings of forgiveness.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, Thank You for the boundless forgiveness You have shown me through Jesus Christ. Help me to forgive others as freely as You forgive me, even when it feels impossible. Soften my heart, cleanse me of bitterness, and fill me with Your love and mercy. Teach me to release every hurt into Your hands and to live in the freedom and healing that comes from forgiveness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

The Forgiveness Letter

1. Approach someone who has wronged you (face to face, through a text message, through a letter, etc.), expressing your feelings honestly and releasing them through forgiveness.

2. End the letter by stating, “I forgive you, just as God has forgiven me.”

3. Decide whether to share it or keep it as a personal act of letting go, depending on the situation.

4. Spend time in prayer, asking God to soften your heart further toward forgiveness and healing.

5. Write down the names of the people who have wronged you and ask God to help you forgive them. You may need to fast and pray over that list.

6. Share this message with someone.

WHY DO GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO BAD PEOPLE?

ENVY OF THE WICKED

KEY TEXT: *Psalm 37:1-2 (KJV) – "[1] Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. [2] For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb."*

Notice verse two says 'cut down and whither.' This phrase means that God will eradicate them. God will not trim them and leave some of them to remain. They will be cut down and withered. Whatever they have will be cut down with them, and it will fade as well because God does not delight in evil.

Evil is compared to grass. Grass proliferates quickly, but it is weak and does not go far in stature. It does not grow to be exceedingly long, broad, or firm. Evil people might have

increased with their wicked efforts, but they will not go far in their wickedness, just like the grass. They may have little success, which may seem much in the eyes of some people. However, if they had submitted themselves to God, God would have given them tremendous success rather than the counterfeit one they got from their wicked efforts.

Jeremiah 17:11 (KJV) – "As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

Jeremiah 17:11 gives an excellent comparison to the success of the wicked. Sitting on eggs and not hatching them is equivalent to having riches that do not bear fruit. It is also equal to having wealth for a shorter time than expected. The partridge sits on her eggs but leaves the hatching done by another bird of a different kind. This comparison means that the righteous will enjoy the wicked's efforts.

Let us look at some of the curses, God promises the disobedient (wicked):

Deuteronomy 28:30 (KJV) – "Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof."

Deuteronomy 28:33 (KJV) – "The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up;"

Deuteronomy 28:38-39 (KJV) – "[38] Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it. [39] Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them."

In the above verses, we see that even though the wicked will get riches, they shall not enjoy them. All their hard work will be in vain, for they will not get anything from their efforts.

Imagine, working seven days a week, instead of six as you keep the Seventh day Sabbath holy and not enjoying the fruits of your labor.

The verse below exemplifies it further:

Proverbs 13:22 (KJV) – "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just."

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (KJV) – "[7] Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. [8] For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

While the Bible compares the righteous to a tree, the wicked are compared to grass (Psalm 37:2), the green herb (Psalm 37:2), and the heath (Jeremiah 17:6). A tree takes longer to grow than grass. But it grows longer, broader, and stronger

than the grass, the green herb, and the heath. One can easily uproot grass with one hand, but for a tree to be uprooted, it takes the tremendous effort of a multitude of strong men.

As a Christian, when you see the wicked look like they are being blessed, do not fret. Do not be envious of them because God's work inside you is excellent. He develops you into a robust tree that nobody can easily cut down like grass.

Psalm 73:1-3 (KJV) – "[1] Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. [2] But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. [3] For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

In Psalm 73, David almost lost his faith when he saw the wicked prosper. However, in the latter end, God made him king over them and made him more remarkable than all of them. The story of David is narrated over thousands of generations, but nobody in this present age knows who the

'prosperous' wicked that David envied were. This example clearly shows that the prosperity of the wicked is temporary.

Be Patient on God's Promises

2 Peter 3:9 (ESV) – "The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness." God is not slow, therefore, be patient and let Him do His work in you.

Isaiah 30:18 (NKJV) – "Blessed *are* all those who wait for Him."

Luke 18:7-8 (KJV) – "[7] And will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He delay long over them? [8] I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily."

Nkosana Makate is a South African man who invented the "please call me" function for Vodacom, which happens to be a parent company of Kenya's Safaricom. He created it in

2001 and was not paid immediately for that invention. He worked for Vodacom and left in 2004. Twenty-one years later, in 2022, the court ruled that he should be compensated 1.3 billion dollars.

He would have been paid a tiny amount if he had been compensated immediately in 2001 after he created it. Maybe he would have been compensated less than 0.01% of what he has been paid now. This illustration is a powerful example that God is not slow concerning His promise. God does not delay, and sometimes he does not give you what you want immediately. However, His timing is always right. This illustration is also an incredible example of how nothing good you have done, especially out of a good motive, will be left unrewarded. God is not a robber. He pays for everything.

Therefore, always do righteousness.

“By the laws of God in nature, effect follows cause with unvarying certainty. The reaping testifies to the sowing. Here

no pretense is tolerated. Men may deceive their fellow men and may receive praise and compensation for service which they have not rendered. But in nature there can be no deception. On the unfaithful husbandman the harvest passes sentence of condemnation. And in the highest sense this is true also in the spiritual realm. It is in appearance, not in reality, that evil succeeds. The child who plays truant from school, the youth who is slothful in his studies, the clerk or apprentice who fails of serving the interests of his employer, the man in any business or profession who is untrue to his highest responsibilities, may flatter himself that, so long as the wrong is concealed, he is gaining an advantage. But not so; he is cheating himself. The harvest of life is character, and it is this that determines destiny, both for this life and for the life to come." – Education, Page 108.2, Ellen G. White.

Psalm 37:5 (KJV) – "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass."

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help me to trust in Your perfect timing and justice. Guard my heart from envy and remind me that Your blessings are eternal and unmatched. Let my focus remain on Your goodness and promises, knowing that You are faithful to reward righteousness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

1. Take a quiet moment today to write down three specific ways God has shown His faithfulness to you in the past.
2. Reflect on how His timing has been perfect, even when it seemed delayed.
3. Keep this list as a reminder to trust Him when you feel envious or discouraged by the success of others.

4. Share this message with someone.

FEBRUARY

GOD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESULTS

KEY TEXT: *1 Corinthians 3:6-9 (NKJV) – "[6] I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. [7] So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. [8] Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. [9] For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building."*

Paul says, "I planted" – In other words, he is saying, "I did my part."

Apollos Watered – Apollos did his part.

But God gave the increase – Notice, the sentence starts with but. The purpose of the word 'but' is to introduce a statement

or clause contrasting with what has been mentioned. What Paul is saying is that their efforts could not bring results. Even though they did their part, whatever they did could have been in vain if God did not bring the increase.

Therefore, in whatever you do, keep in mind that your effort is essential but profitable results do not come from your efforts. Abundance comes from God. Keep in mind that it was possible for Paul and Apollos to plant and to water, but their efforts have resulted in a loss. There are farmers who follow all the 'right' procedures when farming, but their actions result in huge losses. Likewise, some businesspeople put a lot of effort into their business only to result in losses.

When you see results in anything that you do, please do not take it for granted. Thank God for giving you those results. That is why tithing is essential. It is a show of gratitude to God. 100% of your increase belongs to God, but since God is loving, just, and merciful, He only requests for 10% of what is already His.

Why Then Should You Put Effort?

In the Sabbath commandment, God commands us to work for six days (Exodus 20:9). In other words, He commands us to do our part. Doing our part shows faith in God because faith without actions is dead (James 2:17). Secondly, God gave us various gifts and capabilities for a reason. “God cannot do what you can do for yourself because if He does that, it becomes a waste of the gift He gave you.” – Pastor Randy Skeete.

Notice in all of Jesus Miracles; He required the receiver of the miracle to do something.

- When Jesus healed the man at the pool of Bethesda who had an infirmity for 38 years, He told the man, “Arise, take up thy bed and walk” – John 5:8.
- When Jesus raised Lazarus (John 11:1-44), He told the people to roll the stone. If he had the power to

raise the dead, He could move the stone as well. However, He did not do that. He needed them to display faith by doing what they could. After they expressed faith, He used divine power to raise Lazarus.

- In 1 Corinthians 3:6, Paul could plant, while Apollos could water. God could not do this for them. They had to do the planting and watering by themselves.

How is Divine Power Necessary?

- In John 5, without the intervention of divine power, the man who had an infirmity for 38 years would not be healed.
- In John 11:1-44, without the intervention of divine power, Lazarus would not have risen. Without divine power, the people would have rolled the stone in vain.

- In Luke 8:40-48, without the intervention of divine power, the woman would not be healed. She would have touched the hem of Jesus' garment in vain.

If we look at the world today, we can see that:

1. Some people have extraordinary talent, and their abilities have not amounted to much because God gives the increase.
2. Some people are so hardworking, but their hard work bears extraordinarily little or no results because God gives the increase.
3. Many students are brilliant, but they end up failing because it is God who gives the increase.
4. Some people have a lot of knowledge but cannot do much with it because it is God who gives the increase.

Genesis 39:2-3 (KJV) – "[2] And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his

master the Egyptian. [3] And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand."

It was the Lord who made Joseph prosper. Not Joseph's efforts.

"To every man is given "his work" (Mark 13:34), the work for which his capabilities adapt him, the work which will result in greatest good to himself and to his fellow men, and in greatest honor to God." Education, Page 138.1, Ellen G. White.

"Thus our business or calling is a part of God's great plan, and, so long as it is conducted in accordance with His will, **He Himself is responsible for the results**. "Laborers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9), our part is faithful compliance with His directions. Thus there is no place for anxious care. Diligence, fidelity, caretaking, thrift, and discretion are called for. Every faculty is to be exercised to

its highest capacity. But the dependence will be, not on the successful outcome of our efforts, but on the promise of God. The word that fed Israel in the desert, and sustained Elijah through the time of famine, has the same power today. “Be not therefore anxious (R.V.), saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? … Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:31-33.” -Education, Page 138.2, Ellen G. White.

May the Lord God intervene in your efforts as you do your best!

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for being the One who brings increase. I acknowledge that all my efforts are nothing without Your divine intervention. Teach me to trust You as I

work diligently with the gifts You have given me. May my heart always give You the glory for every success, and may I faithfully fulfill my part with joy. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Activity

Gratitude Garden:

1. Take a small pot or container and plant seeds or place a potted plant in it.
2. Label the pot with “God Gives the Increase” as a reminder of 1 Corinthians 3:6-9.
3. Water the plant daily as a symbol of doing your part. Reflect on how the growth of the plant depends on God's provision of sunlight, nutrients, and life itself.

4. As the plant grows, take a moment each day to thank God for His blessings in your life and commit your efforts to Him.

5. Share this message with someone.

GOD WANTS YOU TO PROSPER

KEY TEXT: *Psalm 35:27 (KJV) – "Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant."*

God is happy when you prosper, but there is one condition. The condition He gives is that you must be His servant for Him to delight in your prosperity. As a servant submits wholly to the master, you must submit wholly to God.

How do you submit yourself to God?

Joshua 1:7 (KJV) – "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest."

For one to obey God's commandments, one needs strength and courage. They need strength and courage because the winds of opposition are great. If you make a solemn decision to obey God, you may displease the closest people, such as your family and friends. Be steadfast in obeying God; He will fulfil His promise of making you prosper wherever you go. When God says, “wherever you go,” He means that.

Joshua 1:8 (NKJV) – “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Note the ending of the above verse; it says, 'good success,' meaning there is a bad type of 'success' you can have. Good success means total blessings. It means the combination of good health, good people around you, peace of mind, wealth, and possession of all the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit.

Some people have been blessed with wealth but lack health. Others have been blessed with health but lack wealth. If you surrender your life to God and obey Him, you will receive full blessings. Everyone can succeed in everything they do; the only requirement for that is to give total surrender to God.

As a child of God, whether you go to the desert or the wilderness or in a land full of famine or war, you shall always prosper. Your location does not limit God because He created the entire universe (Genesis 1:1). Deuteronomy 28:3 (KJV) – "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field."

This verse means that God shall bless you everywhere you go. It does not matter how bad the economy is of the place that you are currently in. When God says He will bless you there, you can rest on His word. God blessed Isaac in a foreign land that was facing famine. God blessed him so much that the people of that land were astonished. They

could not believe how a foreigner could prosper in their land, which had famine while their lives were deteriorating due to that famine (Genesis 26).

Matthew 5:14-16 (KJV) – "[14] Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. [15] Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. [16] Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

God wants you to stand out and be a shining light in this murky world. God wants you to prosper so that more people can come to Him. However, He sets a condition you must meet for Him to bless you.

What is the condition?

Deuteronomy 28:1 (KJV) – "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I

command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:”

True prosperity will come in abundance if you obey everything God says. That is the condition. You must keep all His commandments, including the ones you do not like. Do not expect God to bless you 100% while your obedience is 99%. Because if your obedience to God is 99%, the question is, who is controlling the remaining 1%?

Deuteronomy 28:1 is extremely specific. It says, "All His commandments which He has commanded you." For God to set you on high above all nations of the earth as He has promised in this verse, you need to obey His commandments, not somebody else's commandments.

Many of us neglect God’s commandments by obeying human authority. For example, God has said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." You go to a dating coach with four PhDs in various fields relating to marriage with over 30 years of

counselling experience. She tells you, "You can have sex before marriage as long as you are faithful to that one person." You choose to obey her because she is an authority in that field and disobey God, not knowing that God is the one who created marriage.

God has said, "Return a tithe" a distinguished billionaire in society comes and tells you, "Don't return the tithe; pastors are going to eat it and make themselves rich, instead use the tithe money to go and help the poor." You choose to obey that billionaire and disobey God not knowing that silver and gold and everything in heaven and earth belongs to God.

God has repeatedly said in the Bible that the seventh day is the Sabbath. A pastor who is so charismatic and has succeeded in pulling crowds worldwide tells you, “Any day can be the Sabbath, God is not narrow-minded and petty to judge us over something small like a day.” What we do not know is that God always has a reason for doing and saying everything.

When instructing Noah to build the ark, He gave specific materials and measurements for the building of the ark. Had Noah missed one inch or used alternative materials, the ark would have fallen short of God's glory. When giving instructions on the sanctuary and the Ark of the Covenant, he was ultra-specific on every little detail (Exodus 25-27).

There is a reason He said the seventh day and not any other day. God is not a haphazard God. He does everything for a reason. When God tells you to do something, do it without question. Do it exactly as He has said it.

In the story of Zacchaeus, Jesus tells Zacchaeus, in Luke 19:5, “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.” What did Zacchaeus do? Luke 19:6, “And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.” Zacchaeus did exactly as Christ had told him to. And as a result, He received a blessing which is salvation.

Many of us have misunderstood Colossians 2:16, which says, "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:" We should note that the verse starts with "Let no man judge you." No man should judge you for whatever sin you are committing. God is the only one who is allowed to judge you. However, it does not stop the act from being sinful. God, who is all-knowing, looked down the ages and noticed that some Sabbath-keeping Christians would be judging others for not keeping the Sabbath when it is not their work to do so. God does not say do not keep the Sabbath day. He says, "Don't judge someone for not doing it."

If you want God to bless you fully, you must do exactly as God tells you to. If you do that, you will synchronize with God, and He will bless you. But if you choose to obey someone else in place of God, you should go to that person to give you blessings.

For example, if you are employed and under a boss, you must do the work assigned to you to get wages from that boss. You cannot work for IBM and expect to get a salary from Microsoft. Likewise, you cannot work for a fashion house and hope to get compensation from the hospital. The conditions for any job are that for one to earn from that job, they need to do the related work assigned to them. God wants you to do exactly what He has told you to because he wants to bless you.

Obedience to God is an expression of love for Him (John 14:15 (KJV) – If ye love me, keep my commandments). Obedience to God is an expression that you genuinely believe in Him. The faith chapter, which is Hebrews 11, mentions various heroes of faith. All those heroes of faith, obeyed God.

For example, Hebrews 11:7 (KJV) – "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he

condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Noah did what God had told him to. He built the ark. When you are an accountant in an organization, you need to do the work you have been given in your role as an accountant. You cannot do the job of a cleaner and expect to get the salary assigned to an accountant.

Every organization and every government on earth has rules. If you disobey those rules, there are penalties. It will be unreasonable to expect God's government to be any different. God's standards are superseding high that the only way He can explain them is through symbolizing the distance between heaven and earth. Isaiah 55:8-9 (KJV) – "[8] For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. [9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Because of His loving nature, God may exercise mercy on someone if they live a disobedient life, but one day the doors of mercy will close on that person.

God's children enjoy a level of favor that others do not enjoy. They have special blessings that others do not have. Even though God gives rain to the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45), God reserves special blessings to those who obey Him. This rule does not mean that God is unfair. He blesses His obedient children so that others can look at their lives and be drawn to Him because He loves everybody and does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9).

These are some of the things that God wants for us that we may not know (based on Deuteronomy 28:1-14):

1. God wants everyone to go to heaven.
2. God wants everyone to be rich materially.
3. God wants everyone to be healthy.

4. God wants everyone to have wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.
5. God wants everyone to get the most suitable marriage partner.
6. God wants your kids to be well-behaved.
7. God wants everyone to have the right set of friends.
8. And there are many other blessings that God wants to give you.

The reason we are facing the problems we are facing is because of sin. Remove sin, and all these problems will go away. In heaven, there will be no sin, and thus there will be no problems.

The work of salvation is also a work of restoration. The work of salvation is meant to restore all these blessings lost due to sin. Luke 19:10 (KJV) – “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The work of salvation is meant to restore all the privileges that sin lost. Romans 8:32

(KJV) – "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Psalm 1:1-2 (KJV) – "[1] Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. [2] But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night."

Always meditate on God's Word. Always meditate on God's Commandments. Before you complain to God for not giving you what you want, go to the commandments in Exodus 20, read them, and ask yourself which ones you are not keeping.

When the rich young ruler went to Jesus to ask Him what He shall do to get eternal life, this is what Jesus responded, Matthew 19:17 (KJV) – "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

The young man asked Jesus which commandments he meant. This is what Jesus responded, Matthew 19:18-19 (KJV) – "[18] Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, [19] Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The young man said that He had kept all these commandments, but when Jesus told him to sell all his possessions, give the proceeds to the poor and follow Him, he went away sorrowfully.

If you take a closer look, you can notice that Jesus listed the commandments that are related to the relationship between man and his fellow man. He did not list the commandments relating to God and man's relationship.

The action of going away meant that man esteemed his riches more than God. This action signified that he had another God before God and that was his money. This means that his relationship with God was missing something. The rich man refused to give his possessions to the poor, meaning

he did not love his neighbor as himself as he had claimed to. In short, he broke the two sets of commandments: love for God and love for his fellow man.

We may think that the rich young ruler's story is far-fetched and does not relate to us. That is how we behave as Christians. We are filled with self-righteousness, just like the rich young ruler. We are in a comfort zone where we tend to believe that we have done all we can to please God, and we need not do anything more. Such thoughts lead to spiritual stagnation and degradation, eventually resulting in stagnation in all aspects of our lives.

As you read the commandments and meditate on them, ask yourself, are you fully keeping them. Tell God to search your heart and show you what more you need to do because the commandments of God are so deep and high. Matthew 5:21-22 (KJV) – "[21] Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That

whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

You may think you have obeyed the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," because you have not physically murdered someone.

However, like each commandment, God defines killing not just in the physical sense but also in the spiritual sense.

These are some of the examples of killing that we may not know:

1. Hating people in our hearts. We ought to love everybody, including our enemies.
2. Discouraging people and shutting down their dreams, thus killing their ambition.

3. Treating people with contempt, this action kills them mentally because it makes them feel less worthy.

4. Drinking alcohol and taking drugs (Our bodies are the temple of God, and we are destroying them by doing that (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)).

5. Failure to exercise temperance when eating. Either eating the wrong food or too much of the right stuff (Our bodies are the temple of God, and we are destroying them by doing that (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)).

Examine the last commandment that tells us not to covet. Ask yourself how often you go to social media and wish to have things someone else has. And as minor as this action looks, it hurts us because we are not fully integrated with those lives to whom we compare ourselves.

We do not know if they are genuinely happy or not as they look on social media. We do not know the battles they are

fighting behind social media. We do not know if the life they are displaying is real. Many people have sunk into depression because of this. Many individuals have gone to the extreme of committing suicide because of this.

We should not compare ourselves to anyone because our paths and purposes differ. “To every man is given "his work" (Mark 13:34), the work for which his capabilities adopt him” – Education, Page 138.1, Ellen G. White.

If people did not covet, most of them would not have gotten into some of the mental health issues that they have gotten. If people did not covet, they would not have entered some of the illegal businesses or other sinful ways of making money. If people did not covet, they would not have gotten into some of the debt, thus causing financial instability in their lives. These few examples alone show us the curses of disobedience and the blessings of obedience. Everything God tells us to do is for our benefit. Everything God tells us

to do is meant to give us gifts in our current lives and the afterlife.

As you examine your sins, do not view them as impossible to overcome. Because if you view them as impossible, the devil will bring all sorts of excuses and explanations why you cannot overcome them. Take your sins to God, ask for forgiveness, and tell God to help you overcome them. You will be surprised by what will happen. Remember that God's power is the most powerful in the universe because His power created everything. Therefore, combine your efforts with divine power, and you shall see significant changes in your life.

Deuteronomy 28:1 (KJV) – “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:”

Notice the last phrase of the above verse. It says, “that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.” One of the reasons why many are reluctant to obey God is because they think obedience to God is only relevant to enter heaven, and it will take a long time for Jesus to return.

In Deuteronomy 28:1, God does not mention going to heaven, even though heaven should be the ultimate goal for all Christians. In His wisdom, He says, "above all nations of the earth." God says that if you obey His commandments, He will improve your quality of life on earth.

“It is wrong to waste our time, wrong to waste our thoughts. We lose every moment that we devote to self-seeking. If every moment were valued and rightly employed, we should have time for everything we need to do for ourselves or the world. In the expenditure of money, in the use of time, strength, opportunities, let every Christian look to God for

guidance."—The Ministry of Healing, Page 208, Ellen G. White.

There are certain things we do that we do not know are sinful. That is why we need to ask God to search our hearts. Wasting time, wasting our thoughts, and wasting money is as evil as killing, stealing, and committing adultery. We are wasting what we do not own. We own nothing. We do not even own ourselves because if we did, we would dictate the day we should be born and the day we die.

Sin goes deep, the same way righteousness goes deep. That is why we need to surrender to God moment by moment. Giving in to distractions, such as scrolling on social media when doing important work, is as immoral as committing adultery.

We are in a constant battle, and we need not slumber. We need to always be vigilant. Before doing something, ask yourself if you are doing the right thing. And if you are doing

the right thing, ask yourself if that is the best way to do it since we need to do everything excellently.

“Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student, there is opened a path of continual progress, an object to achieve, a standard to attain that includes everything good, pure, and noble. Students will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. But their efforts will be directed to objects as much higher than mere selfish and temporal interests as the heavens are higher than the earth.” – True Education, Page 12, Ellen G. White.

“God’s standards are high that no other standard is higher” – Pastor Randy Skeete.

One of the reasons God has blessed very few people to astonishing levels is that very few people have surrendered totally to God. Many people languish in mediocrity and

expect excellent results. Ellen White writes that true conversion is exceedingly rare.

Very few people are willing to obey God fully. True Christianity is more than going to church. It is more than praying every day. It is more than having a role in the church. There is no problem with doing all these things. However, the questions that arise are; what is the motive for doing them? And how well do you do them?

“The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is

pleasing to God." – Christ Object Lessons, Page 97.3, Ellen G. White.

The above quotation tells us that some people attempt to obey God to merely fulfil a requirement. Their obedience does not flow from deep within. Ask yourself, how many times have you prayed hurriedly just to have a clear conscience that you have prayed and to tick it off your to-do list? Therefore, instead of asking God why dreadful things happen to good people, you should ask Him, what are you not doing that you are supposed to do? Never assume that your spiritual life is perfect, and you are in a sinless state.

God's standards are high, and he has given us the grace and ability to meet them.

Ephesians 3:20 (KJV) - "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

God can do beyond what we ask or imagine, and He will do it if we obey Him.

One of the devil's lies is that it is impossible to live a sinless life. The devil has succeeded in causing us to believe that the commandments are difficult to obey. 1 John 5:3 (KJV) – "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." The Bible says that the commandments are not hard. We have deeply sunk into sin, and as a result, we view the commandments as burdensome to keep.

Romans 8:7 (KJV) – "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Our carnal minds naturally resist God; therefore, it will be difficult to obey God's commands with our power. God knows this, and that is why He is willing to give us His infinite power to enable us to overcome sin. Therefore, we need to ask God to help us overcome whatever sin we struggle with, and He will ease our burdens. Matthew

11:28 (KJV) – "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

God's power unlimited. He is an omnipotent God.

Below are verses that speak of the omnipotence of God:

Luke 1:37 (KJV) – "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

Matthew 19:26 (KJV) – "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

Jeremiah 32:17 (KJV) – "Ah Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:"

Philippians 4:13 (KJV) – "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Genesis 18:14 (KJV) – “Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”

Jeremiah 32:27 (KJV) – “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?”

Romans 8:31 (KJV) – “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

We should not be afraid of anything nor let challenges push us down because God has our backs with his infinite power. Ask God to give you the strength and courage to keep His commandments and watch your life prosper. He will surely give you if you ask Him because it is His will for you to obey Him.

A popular teaching says that because we are under grace, we need not keep the commandments/obey God.

What does the Bible say?

Romans 6:1-2 (KJV) – "[1] What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? [2] God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Romans 6:15 (KJV) – "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid."

Finally, trust in God to fulfil the promises He has made for you in your life.

Isaiah 55:10-11 (KJV) – "[10] For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: [11] So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Numbers 23:19 (KJV) – "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath He

said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

MAY GOD GIVE YOU THE GRACE TO MAKE YOU OBEY HIM, AND MAY HE MAKE YOU PROSPER IN EVERYTHING YOU DO!

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for taking pleasure in my prosperity. Help me to surrender my heart and life fully to You, obeying Your commandments with courage and faith. Guide me to walk in Your ways, so I may shine as a light in this world, bringing glory to Your name. Amen.

Activity

1. **Daily Obedience Tracker:** Create a simple checklist for the week with two sections:
    - **God's Commandments to Follow:** Include actions like "spend 10 minutes meditating on scripture," "show kindness to someone," or "refrain from negative talk."
    - **Areas to Surrender:** Identify one area each day where you struggle to fully obey God (e.g., forgiving others, tithing, or observing rest).
2. At the end of each day, review your progress and pray for strength and courage to improve. Reflect on how submitting to God's will is bringing peace and prosperity to your life.
3. Share this message with someone.

MARCH

NEVER WITHHOLD GOOD

KEY TEXT: *Proverbs 3:27 (NKJV) – "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so."*

James 2:15-16 (KJV) – "[15] If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, [16] And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

Let us consider some examples of withholding good from those to whom it is due:

1. When you procrastinate and do not work on your idea, you are withholding good from those it is due.

2. When you have been given responsibility anywhere, be it in the office or church, and fail to carry it out or do it poorly, you are withholding good from those it is due.

3. When you fail to do everything with excellence (Ecclesiastes 9:10), you are withholding good from those it is due.

4. When you hide your Christianity from people to fit in or look cool, you are withholding good from those to whom it is due.

5. When you give someone the wrong advice, knowing it very well is wrong. You are withholding good from those to whom it is due.

6. When you lie to someone, you are withholding good from those to whom it is due.

7. When you see something good in a person and fail to complement it for selfish reasons, you are withholding good from those to whom it is due.

8. When you fail to tithe, you are withholding good from those to whom it is due.

9. When you fail to give to the poor, you are withholding good from those to whom it is due.

10. If you fail to use your gifts and talents, you are withholding good from those to whom it is due.

11. If you fail to do everything to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31), you are withholding good from those to whom it is due.

12. Failing to pray for others is withholding good from those to whom it is due.

13. Failing to study God's Word is withholding good from those to whom it is due because God's word can change all unrighteous characters.

14. Failing to share Truth is withholding good from those due to it.

15. Preaching water and drinking wine is withholding good from those to whom it is due.

16. If someone oppressed comes to you needing a listening ear, and you fail to give it, you are withholding good from those to whom it is due.

17. Failing to attend fellowship with others on Sabbath or on any other opportunity which is within your reach is withholding good from those to whom it is due.

Hebrews 11:29 (KJV) – "By faith, they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."

God told the Egyptians to let the Israelites go. Instead of obeying God, they pursued them, chasing them, trying to get them back, and as a result, they drowned.

You might be drowning in life because you constantly withhold good from those to whom it is due.

“In the harvest the seed is multiplied. A single grain of wheat, increased by repeated sowings, would cover a whole land with golden sheaves. So widespread may be the influence of a single life, of even a single act.” – Education, Page 109.2, Ellen G. White.

MAY YOU LOVE TO GIVE MORE THAN TO RECEIVE!

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the many blessings You have given me. Help me to never withhold good from those to whom it is due. Give me a heart that is generous, a spirit that is obedient, and hands that are quick to serve. May I use my gifts, time, and resources for Your glory and the benefit of

others. Let me not be selfish or fearful, but full of faith, love, and kindness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

Identify one area where you may have been withholding good—whether in your work, relationships, giving, or faith. Take deliberate action to correct it today. For example:

- If you have been procrastinating on an idea, take the first step to bring it to life.
- If you have not been giving generously, find a person or ministry in need, and bless them.
- If you have held back encouragement, take time to compliment or uplift someone today.
- If you have been silent about your faith, share a testimony or scripture with someone. Also share this message that you have read with someone.

Let this be a habit, choosing to do good whenever it is in your power to do so!

THE ESSENCE OF TITHE

KEY TEXT: *Malachi 3:10 (KJ21) – "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith," saith the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

Some people say, "I cannot take my tithe to the church, I will instead use it to go help the poor because pastors use it for their own benefit to enrich themselves"

What does the Bible say?

Malachi 3:10 (KJ21) – "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith," saith the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

The phrase *my house* means the church because the church is the house of God. The tithe is meant to build the church and progress the work of God. If God wanted you to give the tithe to the poor, he would have told you to give it to the poor and not bring it to church.

“The tithe ... *is* the Lord's.” Here the same form of expression is employed as in the law of the Sabbath. “The seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” Exodus 20:10. God reserved to Himself a specified portion of man's time and of his means, and no man could, without guilt, appropriate either for his own interests.” – Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 525.5, Ellen G. White.

The first time the principle of tithe appeared was in Genesis 14.

Genesis 14:19-20 (KJV) - "[19] And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: [20] And blessed be the most high God, which hath

delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." Reading this verse, it is clear that Abraham didn't give the tithe to the poor. He gave the tithe to God. Those who say that tithe was for the Israelites, there were no Israelites at that time, Israel began with Jacob.

Let's look at someone else who returned a tithe to God:

Genesis 28:20-22 (KJV) - "[20] And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, [21] So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: [22] And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

There were poor people, widows, and orphans in those days, but Jacob did not say he would give a tenth to the poor. He said he would give a tenth (tithe) to God. Up to where we have reached, we have established that the tithe was a

promise from Abraham and Jacob to God regarding the blessings/increase God had caused them to have. God was pleased with this and therefore started making commandments concerning the tithe.

Let's look at more scriptures on tithe:

Leviticus 27:30 (KJV) - "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." Here the Bible says that the tithe is Holy and for the Lord.

Perhaps many may ask, "How then do we give the tithe to God and we cannot access God physically?" Numbers 18:21 (KJV) - "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."

There were twelve tribes of Israel, but the tithe was not dedicated to the other eleven tribes. It was dedicated to one

tribe only, which was the Levites. The question is, who were the Levites?

Numbers 18:23-24 (KJV) - "[23] But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. [24] But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance."

The Levites were the only tribe in Israel that was not allowed to do secular work. They were to dedicate their time and energy to do God's work. The Levites could not earn a living from secular work like the rest of Israel, and since they could not do so, God dedicated a tithe to them (God cares for all of his children).

The Levites, in this case, represent the pastors, priests and bishops in the church. Again, we can see that God did not command the Israelites to take the tithe to the poor, but He commanded them to give it to the Levites so that they may have the strength to continue to minister to God and may further the purpose of God.

Now let's look at some other verses that some misinterpret to mean that tithe needs to be substituted for charity money.

Deuteronomy 26:12 (KJV) - "When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled."

What the Bible is saying in this verse is that the tithe is meant to cover a variety of purposes, not just poverty. It starts by saying the Levites (which represent the priests in the church, there is a reason why the Levites are listed first in the list,

God is not a haphazard God), then it says the stranger (representing people who don't know God), then it says the fatherless (this means the orphans at the same time, someone who hasn't accepted God in his life is fatherless) and the widow.

In other words, the Bible says tithe is meant to address various problems on earth, not just poverty. Poverty is a big problem in the world, but it is not the only problem. Millions of people are rich but face depression, stress, and anxiety because they haven't kept God at the center of their lives. Taking the tithe to the poor only means neglecting these other groups of people.

God is calling upon all who are facing various challenges to come to Him so that He can give them a sense of direction and fill their void. Many in hospitals have the money to afford medical care but are facing chronic illnesses that are untreatable to earthly doctors and may have lost hope. God

is calling them to go to him (Matthew 11:28) so that he can give them hope and heal them of their diseases.

Many are alive and kicking with lots of wealth but do not know God and are living in sin. God is calling these ones too to go to Him. The tithe is meant to monetarily cover all these problems, which is why it needs to be directed to God's house.

One serious danger is that the 'prosperity gospel,' which is so popular nowadays, has caused many to believe that poverty is the only problem. When Jesus was on this earth, He did not minister to the poor alone. He healed the sick, caused the blind to see, caused the lame to walk, raised the dead, and healed the brokenhearted.

Return your tithe whole-heartedly, don't care about church leaders using it for their selfish ambitions because they have their reward. As a child of God, do your part. Practice

righteousness always, not only when situations are favorable.

When God gave the commandment to return the tithe, He knew that there would be pastors who would use it for their own selfish ambitions (because the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked, Jeremiah 17:9), but He still commands you to return the tithe.

The two sons of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas were priests (serving the highest positions in the church). However, 1 Samuel 2:12 says that they did not know God (despite serving in the church). There are many people who serve in the church that don't know God. 1 Samuel 2:13-17 narrates how Hophni and Phinehas used to mishandle God's sacrifice for their own benefit, sometimes burning it (making a Barbecue) and eating it.

The Bible does not say the length of time they carried out this immoral practice, it might have been a short time or even

a very long time. God sitting on His heavenly throne saw all these and he decided to punish the two priests.

God punished the priests. He did not tell the Israelites to stop presenting their sacrifices to the priests. He punished them by killing them. He changed the people committing evil (by killing the evil priests and bringing in new priests) but did not change the system that He had instituted. The same fate fell upon Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu. Therefore, return the tithe faithfully as God has said. If the clergy or church officials mishandle it, God will deal with them. At the same time remember to always pray for the leadership in your church so that they may know God and walk righteously.

“The system of tithes and offerings was intended to impress the minds of men with a great truth—that God is the source of every blessing to His creatures, and that to Him man's gratitude is due for the good gifts of His providence.” – Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 525.3, Ellen G. White.

Always endeavor to do as God has said, exactly how He has said it, and not on your own assumptions and creativity.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the wisdom and provision You have given me. Help me to trust in Your Word and honor You with my tithes, knowing that it supports the work of Your kingdom. Strengthen my faith to obey, even when I don't understand, and give me a heart that gives cheerfully. I pray for church leaders, that they may be faithful stewards of what is given. May my obedience bring glory to You and blessings beyond measure. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

1. This week, take time to study Malachi 3:10, Genesis 14:19-20, and Leviticus 27:30.
2. Write down three key lessons about tithing.
3. Then, set aside time to pray specifically for your church leaders, asking God to guide them in the proper use of tithes for His work.
4. If you haven't been consistent in tithing, take a step of faith and return your tithe to God this week, trusting in His promise to bless you abundantly.
5. Share this message with someone.

APRIL

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

KEY TEXT: *Ephesians 6:10 (KJV) – "Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."*

Many times in the Bible, God is referred to as a Rock. Psalms 62:2 (KJV) – "He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defence: I shall not be moved."

Rock is used to refer to something strong, reliable, or hard.

Let's examine what **strong**, **reliable,** and **hard** mean.

The Dictionary defines strong as the ability to withstand force, pressure, or wear.

The strength of an object is as good as its weakest spot. Everything and every created being have a weak point. That

is why you cannot be strong in yourself. This is because we are neither self-sufficient nor independent. We have to depend on God. God has no weak point. Genesis 8:14 (KJV) – “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” Matthew 19:26 (KJV) – “But Jesus beheld them, and said to them, with men this is impossible but with God all things are possible.” Philippians 4:13 (KJ21) – "I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me."

Isaiah 26:4 (KJV) – “Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” The word everlasting strength means that there is temporal strength. God’s vitality is the only one that is enduring."

Isaiah 26:5 (KJV) – “For He bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city He layeth it low; He layeth it low even to the ground; He bringeth it even to the dust.” (God can bring down the most magnificent people and things. He can exterminate them that no one will ever realize that they ever existed).

Reliable means, always good in quality or performance; able to be trusted

God is reliable. Let's examine the reliability of God:

Numbers 23:19 (KJV) – "God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" This text means that men lie. Not only does it mean that God does not lie, but it also means that He cannot lie.

Psalm 138:2 (KJV) – "For Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name."

One name of God is El Shaddai, which means God almighty or all-powerful. God has magnified His Word above the name El Shaddai, too. God's Word is surer than the sun's rising and setting.

The Dictionary's definition of hard – To be solid or firm.

Firm means something that is not swayed. Any created thing can be shaken. Mountains are among the most stable physical elements that we know on earth. However, with faith, they cannot only be shaken, but we can also move them (Matthew 17:20). God alone cannot be shaken.

The Lord desires to make you strong, reliable, and hard if you trust Him. Psalm 21:7 (KJV) – "For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved." David was strong in the Lord. As a small lad, he brought down the most feared warrior of the Philistine army, causing the entire battalion to take off.

How can I be strong in the Lord?

One must wear God's full armor to be strong in the Lord. The armor of God will facilitate us to rise against the devil's stratagems (Ephesians 6:11).

What is the purpose of the whole armor of God?

Ephesians 6:12 (KJV) – “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Ephesians 6:13 (KJV) – “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

What does having done all to stand mean? It means to be steady and never give up. Have perseverance, no matter how long the battle ensues. Don’t become complacent and grow weary in the fight.

Definition of whole – Something that is complete.

Synonyms for whole – Complete, full, undivided, unreduced, intact, and in one piece. All these terms mean each segment of the armor of God depends on the other. No component can properly function without the other. We can

liken this to the human body, how different parts work together to perform one function.

What does the armor of God comprise of?

The Belt of Truth

Ephesians 6:14 (KJV) – "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness."

Girt means to encircle a part of the body with a belt or band. It also means to strengthen something. Another meaning is to prepare oneself for something challenging.

The loins are the center of procreative power. The loins are always needful of covering (Job 31:20).

Whenever Roman soldiers moved out of the barracks to the rack where they kept the equipment, the belt was the first thing they had to wear. This means to know the truth first.

We need to take our time in studying truth. The more your mind is covered with truth, the more integrity you possess (as a man thinks, so is he, Proverbs 23:7). Your daily exposure to Biblical doctrine and your daily absorption of Biblical teaching are indispensable in girding your loins with truth.

Since the loins are a center for procreative power, you must produce the fruit that the Holy Spirit has instilled in you; you must first gird your loins with truth. Therefore, how you deal with life and all its aspects, i.e., your spiritual life, social life, health, occupation, and business, should all center upon biblical doctrine taught by the Holy Spirit to avoid misconception of the Word of God.

The leading reason the Holy Spirit should guide our Bible study is that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth. John 16:13 (KJV) – "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of

Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come."

The Breastplate of Righteousness

In warfare, a harness system is on the belt, fastening the breastplate in position. The breastplate appears second because it requires the belt to hold it in place. This means you must know the truth and embrace it in your heart to understand what righteousness demands. How do you embrace the truth? By accepting Jesus. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

Breastplate dictionary's definition - is a defensive armor worn over the torso/chest area to preserve it from injury.

What lies in the chest? The heart. Therefore cover/protect your heart with righteousness. Proverbs 4:23 (KJV) – "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." You need to protect your heart because everything comes

from the heart first. All actions performed by the body are first preconceived in mind.

Matthew 6:21 (KJV) – “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Therefore, let your heart treasure righteousness and do things God’s way. If you treasure righteousness in your mind, you will reduce quarrels and disputes with people as Matthew 12:34 (KJV) says, “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

The Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

Ephesians 6:15 (KJV) – “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

A shoe protects your feet from dirt, from numerous ground perils, i.e., getting pricked by thorns, shattered glasses, and blisters.

The shoes cause you to withstand the enemy with firm-footed stability and readiness only developed by the gospel.

The gospel means the good message that Jesus brought. It is the magnificent news of salvation and victory over sin and death that God provides to everyone through the person and finished work of Jesus Christ. The gospel is the sum total of the saving truth. The gospel of Jesus Christ brings peace.

Wherever you go, peace should guide you. Matthew 5:9 (KJV) – "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

The feet are in contact with the ground. Our foundation should be in line with the gospel of Jesus Christ, ready to resist the devil's wiles. Let peace with God arm you with confidence and resolution to proceed forward in all the lines

of duty. However rugged and difficult the road is, God calls you to pass.

The Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16 (KJV) – "above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Above all means more than everything.

To shield means to protect from danger, risk, or undesirable experiences.

You must have your cover of faith because faith gets tested a lot. You must have faith and believe that God will do as He says and appreciate what He has already done. In this flawed world, the wicked one will always throw missiles at us. The enemy will throw darts at you to test the truth you gird yourself with, the righteousness you possess, and if you

believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you need a shield of faith to block all attacks from evil.

What is faith?

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV) – "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

How to get the shield of faith:

Romans 10:17 (KJV) – "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The following are examples of tests that may test your faith:

- You are a widow with five children and have an enormous debt to pay. Will you still return the tithe?
- You are 38 and not married. People are ridiculing you and putting you under pressure for not having children. Will you still preserve your celibacy?

- You are a cabinet minister, and the president gives you an illegal execution deal. If you obey, you receive a glorious reward from him, but your life is threatened if you disobey. Who will you obey, God or the president?

- You are about to graduate, and your final exam is on Sabbath. You have only one paper left. Will you choose to do the exam or keep the Sabbath day holy?

- People have accused you at work, and the bosses require you to swear (remember the Bible warns against swearing, Matthew 5:34-37) or suffer dire consequences (like losing your job or paying a heavy fine). What will you choose?

Hebrews 11:24 (KJV) – "[24] By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. [25] Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the

people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Moses refused to be of the earthly royal family. He rejected the majesty and glory of being in the king's family. He chose to suffer affliction with the lowest people in society (slaves) than enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are seasonal.

Hebrews 11:27 (KJV) – "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Few people can make such a decision.

The Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 6:17 (KJV) – "And take the helmet of salvation,"

A Helmet is a hard or padded hat to prevent your head from injury. A helmet complements the skull in protecting the human brain.

This means that you need to protect your mind.

How can you protect your mind?

Your salvation should be at the forefront of your mind. It will keep your priorities in order.

Philippians 4:8 (KJV) – "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Psalms 1:1-2 (KJV) – "[1] Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. [2] But his delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night."

It may seem hard to think about these things if you are not used to them, but the grace of Jesus will enable you to do it with your full submission to Him.

The Sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:17 (KJV)- “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”

This is the only offensive weapon in the armor of God mentioned.

The sword of the spirit is the Word of God. Use it as Jesus used it in all his 3 temptations. (Matthew 4:1-11) Jesus defeated the devil by telling him, “It is written,” “it is written,” and “it is written.”

“If the Bible were studied as it should be, men would become strong in intellect. The subjects treated upon in the Word of God, the dignified simplicity of its utterance, the noble themes which it presents to the mind, develop faculties in man which cannot otherwise be developed. In the Bible, a boundless field is opened for the imagination. The student will come from a contemplation of its grand themes, from association with its lofty imagery, more pure and elevated in

thought and feeling than if he had spent the time in reading any work of mere human origin, to say nothing of those of a trifling character. Youthful minds fail to reach their noblest development when they neglect the highest source of wisdom—the Word of God. The reason why we have so few men of good mind, of stability and solid worth, is that God is not feared, God is not loved, the principles of religion are not carried out in the life as they should be." — Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 126, 1890. (Fundamentals of Christian Education, 165.), Ellen G. White.

In the above quotation by Ellen G. White, we are shown the value of spending time studying God's Word. In other words, we are shown the value of spending time with God. The essence of the Sabbath is based on spending time with God. When you spend time with someone you value, you do away with all distractions. God expects us to do more than that to Him. Time spent with God on the Sabbath will yield

abundant blessings. Time spent with God on other days of the week will yield additional blessings.

Finally,

Ephesians 6:18 – "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Being watchful – Never slumber even a single minute on your spiritual journey.

Matthew 25:13 (KJV) – "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I put my trust in You, my Rock and my Strength. Help me to stand firm in faith, clothed in Your armor, relying on Your everlasting power. Strengthen me to withstand trials, to walk in righteousness, and to share the peace of the gospel. Let my faith in You be unwavering, for You are my defense, and in You, I shall not be moved. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

- Gather small stones and a large rock (or anything that can replace them).
- Place a piece of paper on top of the small stones and try to balance an object on it, it will be unstable.
- Now place the same object on the large rock, it will remain steady.

- Discuss: What does this teach about being strong in the Lord? How does relying on God make us firm and unshakable in life's challenges?
- Reflect on Isaiah 26:4 and commit to trusting in God's everlasting strength.
- Share this message with someone.

LIGHT VS. DARKNESS

KEY TEXT: *Proverbs 4:18 (KJ21) - "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."*

How comes most activities in the world happen in the daytime? Most learning institutions run their educational programs during the day. Most people work during daylight hours. What does this mean? This means that over 80% of anything to do with productivity happens before twilight.

Let's analyze the night;

Very little goes on after sundown. However, some workplaces operate after nightfall, among other profitable activities. This means nighttime can also be constructive, but not like daytime.

What common thing is there for something worthwhile to come from the day and night? Take a few minutes and think.

Might the high level of energy among people make them effective? Is it passion and drive? Could it be talent and skill? Is it the proper planning? May it be goal setting and ambition, unwilling to stop until they achieve? All these things listed for sure contribute to the success of any person. But something has to come first.

Take some minutes and think again.

The common thing that leads to productivity, whether day or night, is light. Without it, one can barely conduct any activity. Imagine a dark environment. Will you be capable of going to school or work? Picture how hectic it is to move from one room in the house to the other when there is a blackout.

Many blind people depend on those with the physical visual capacity to lead them while they are walking. They may maneuver a few places independently but can't compare to those with intact vision. Regardless of your talent and skill, you need illumination (clarity) to perform your duties. No level of energy or passion produces anything devoid of light.

Let's talk about **LIGHT**.

Genesis 1:2-3 (KJV) – "[2] And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. [3] And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

Darkness existed before God created the world. God is not a haphazard God. God made light before embarking on other things.

Why did the Lord make light first?

The Dictionary Definition of light - is the natural agent that stimulates sight and makes things visible.

Light makes objects seeable. God had to be in an environment where He could look at everything He designs. Since He is the Ruler of all creation, He could have created light as the last thing. However, He wants us to pursue His example, so He started by making light first. He had to work in an organized way, and we should follow suit.

Therefore, light enhances clarity. Why are most ventures carried out in the morning and not at midnight? The main answer is visibility. What makes daytime bright is the sun's illumination. Nights are poorly lit but not entirely dark because the moon and the stars are available, and most towns have man-made street lights. During the day, things are more visible. Many studies have established that productivity among human beings is highest in the morning. Even for activities to happen at night, light must be present.

Genesis 1:4 (KJV) – “And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.”

“God saw the light that it was good” if you notice, God did not mention anything about the darkness. God separated the light from the darkness, meaning they are extreme opposites. They cannot mix. 2 Corinthians 6:14 (NKJV) – “What communion has light with darkness?” Amos 3:3 (KJV) – “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”

Darkness existed before creation. Life is full of innumerable negative factors, similar to darkness. If you don't brighten up your spirit with righteous thoughts, you are prone to live in darkness.

The carnal mind has a high affinity for negativity. Jeremiah 17:9 (KJV) says, “The heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it?” (Meaning only God can perceive its level of wickedness). After iniquity entered the earth, everyone born has an imperfect character.

The faulty nature leads to pessimistic emotions (fear, worry, confusion, etc.). That natural sinfulness has resulted in infants being delivered with physical infirmities and an inclination to transgress.

Let's consider some examples:

- Between an educative and a controversial post, which one goes viral easily?
- The individuals who wronged you and those who did well to you, who do you remember more?
- If a pastor prays for someone and they get healed or is caught in a compromising situation, which one makes more news?

The affinity to negativity (darkness) is so high that you must be deliberate in igniting positivity (light).

"If you do not deliberately switch on the light in your life, darkness will rule because it is automatically there, and it is free." – Kelly Inspiration.

People pay school fees, do online courses, and attend workshops and seminars to improve themselves. No one does all these to fail. Failure is a default setting in your life. Therefore ignite success. Few humans are successful worldwide because few lighten their lives.

Darkness results in immobility. John 12:35 (NKJV) says, “He who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.” When darkness is dominant, you cannot move because nothing will be visible to you. Meaning you cannot bring forth anything positive when you are full of negative thoughts and emotions.

The Holy Book says, “where there is no vision people perish,” in Proverbs 29:18. Our Nations have lacked a definite goal which is why we encounter great deals of corruption and absence of integrity. That is the reason we are perishing. What is one word to replace a scarcity of vision? Darkness.

Lack of integrity is immorality which is why the economy of almost every country is suffering. The Bible confirms, “Righteousness exalteth a nation” (Proverbs 14:34, KJV). Righteousness is light, while unrighteousness is darkness.

Habakkuk 2:2 emphasizes writing one’s vision. The Bible insists on documenting your purpose. Why is it so? One reason is when you write something down, it becomes clear.

How can we irradiate our lives? Through prayer (Talking to God) and studying the Bible (listening to God). These are things we neglect, but let's consider their importance;

The scriptures narrate a story about Hagar and her son Ishmael in the desert when Ishmael was thirsty and almost dying. Hagar cried out to God. What did God do? Genesis 21:19 (KJV) – “And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.”

Judges 16:28 (NKJV) - "Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, “O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one *blow* take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!”

The Philistines had cut off Samson's hair, making his strength void. In addition to that, they blinded him. Before Samson died, he asked God to give him the ability to revenge for his eyes, not his physical strength. He understood that vision was more important than physical power.

Ask God to award you light before you do anything so that things may be clearer to you.

Whenever you face confusion, seek God for knowledge and judgment of the matter, and He will surely do that. The Lord sent an Angel to give Daniel an interpretation of the dream that troubled him (Daniel 7:1-28).

1 Corinthians 14:33 (KJV) – “For God is not the author of confusion.” God is not the author of confusion; the Devil is.

Anything evil is from Satan. Anything good is from God. God is not a God of unrighteousness but righteousness. He is not a God of darkness. He is a God of light.

“”The only light that can illuminate the darkness of a world lying in sin, must come from Christ; and this light is granted to all who will receive it. For, said the great Teacher, “He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” – The Signs of the Times, May 24, 1910, Paragraph 1, Ellen G. White.

“Those who receive the divine radiance are in turn to become light-bearers to the world. Thus our Saviour taught His disciples: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”” - The Signs of the Times, May 24, 1910, Paragraph 2, Ellen G. White.

God allows some light to glow in the darkness as the moon and stars twinkle at night. This means that there is hope. The light at night is not fully bright as it is during the daytime, but if you follow it, it leads you to your destination. This means that even in an unpleasant situation, there is always something desirable amid it. If you use it well, the outcome shall be stupendous.

The same way that dawn comes after the darkest hour. During the COVID-19 pandemic season, jobs, schools, and worship centers were closed, but that did not mean you could not work, study and grow spiritually. In all dark situations, God provides a source of light and a way to access it.

Proverbs 4:18 (KJ21) - "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." When you walk in the light that God has already provided you with, He shall give you more light, thus the path leading to your destination will be clearer. God might have provided you with the light concerning the Sabbath

commandment. Do not block that light. Walk in it and you will open doors to more light.

GOD BLESS YOU ABUNDANTLY AS YOU EMBRACE LIGHT IN YOUR LIFE, SHALOM!

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for being the source of all light and truth. Help me to walk in Your light, that I may see clearly the path You have set before me. Remove all darkness from my heart such as fear, doubt, and sin, so that I may shine brightly for Your glory. Guide my steps, grant me wisdom, and let my life reflect Your goodness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

- Go to a dimly lit or dark room. Try to move around and complete a simple task (e.g., reading a book, writing a sentence, or finding an object).
- Now, switch on a light or use a flashlight. Repeat the task and observe the difference.
- **Reflect:** Just as physical light helps us see and work effectively, God's light which is His Word and guidance, helps us make wise decisions and live righteously.
- Share this message with someone.

Key Verse Reflection: Read Proverbs 4:18 and write down one way you can walk in God's light today.

MAY

BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

KEY TEXT: *Proverbs 23:31-32 (KJV) - "[31] Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. [32] At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."*

Proverbs 23:31-32 warns us against judging things from their appearance. All that glitters is not gold. In its carnality, the human heart cherishes things simply because they glisten. The devil knows this, that is why he has tailored his deception so that it is too close to the truth.

It is like two identical twins who resemble each other, and the sole contrast is a minor beauty spot that regularly passes undiscovered. Sometimes it may take a diligent study of the two to detect that characteristic. Sometimes you may have to

hang around them for ages to notice what differentiates them.

These are some things that glitter that our minds get drawn to that lead to constant problems in our lives and eventually destruction:

1. False doctrines tell you what you want to hear but distort the truth by twisting the Word of God slightly. This minor change changes the whole thing from what it is.

2. A good-looking girl or man you eagerly want to get in a relationship with even though you are not of the same belief.

3. You consider a man or a woman highly valued because he rarely finds time for you and mistreats you. And that action has tricked your mind into wanting him because people crave things they can't easily have.

4. Expensive alcohol that is wrapped in beautiful and elegant artistically crafted bottles.

5. Ungodly modes of dressing appear fashionable because A-list celebrities wear them.

6. Some video games encourage murder, theft, and things contrary to God's commandments.

7. Movies that portray fornication and adultery as cool things to do.

8. Social media influencers and socialites have deceived young girls into subliminal prostitution. They have deceived young girls that all they need is a man with money, while in reality, all they need is Jesus.

9. Cartoons may look funny but are teaching young children evil traits.

10. Love songs and soap operas influence people that the key to perfect love is found in a specific man or

woman. And so people go out there dating one person after the other in search of love, and as a result, they experience countless heartbreaks. If they knew it, they would have focused on Jesus since Jesus is the source of love, the source of true love. Someone said that if Adam had gone looking for a wife, he would have married an animal. Adam did not look for a wife. God brought Adam a wife when he was still in communion with Him.

11. Food that looks delicious and tastes good but is harmful to your health, which the Bible is against, like pork.

12. The media portrays gangster life and the use of foul language as cool.

13. The common and believable lie that any day can be the Sabbath while God ordained the Seventh Day

(Saturday) as the Sabbath right from the first week of creation (Genesis 2:1-3).

14. Worldly educated scientists and billionaires advocate against God, and that one can depend on themselves. If that were true, they would have infinite knowledge, but they keep on studying, meaning they gain more knowledge from others. If that were true, the richest man in the world would have infinite wealth. The fact that sources like the Forbes list can list the wealthiest individuals globally (monetarily) and the amount of money they possess reveals that their wealth is limited because that is countable money. That is finite money. God's riches are infinite because He has the power to create more resources.

Proverbs 14:12 says, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Notice the wording, “It seems right (not wrong)." Something

that seems right may not always be righteous but may closely resemble righteousness.

Samuel was a mighty prophet. He anointed Kings and sought to please God in everything he did. God sent Samuel to anoint a King who will succeed Saul in 1 Samuel 16.

When Samuel saw Eliab, he thought he was chosen by God (1 Samuel 16:6). This is what God said in 1 Samuel 16:7 (KJV) – “But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”

"The Lord's Word to Samuel was, “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” No outward beauty can recommend the soul to

God. The wisdom and excellence revealed in the character and deportment, express the true beauty of the man; and it is the inner worth, the excellency of the heart, that determines our acceptance with the Lord of hosts. How deeply should we feel this truth in the judgment of ourselves and others. We may learn from the mistake of Samuel how vain is the estimation that rests on beauty of face or nobility of stature. We may see how incapable is man's wisdom of understanding the secrets of the heart or of comprehending the counsels of God without special enlightenment from heaven." - Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 638.1, Ellen G. White.

Despite being one of the most powerful prophets that ever lived, Samuel could not resist the tendency to judge someone from their outward appearance. Samuel considered Eliab the chosen one because he had physical features valued in society. If he had not obeyed God and chosen Eliab, he

would have messed up future events intended by God the way Adam and Eve did.

Sin, no matter how small it is, is very dangerous. God might have ordained your success to come at a particular time, but evil will delay it, eventually killing your destiny.

We are limited in wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and discernment because of our sinful nature. 1 Corinthians 13:12 (KJV) - “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

Let us see how the Bible describes Daniel; Daniel 1:4 (KJV) - “Children in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans."

Daniel and his friends were the best among the Israelites, so they were chosen to work in the King's palace. Let us back this evidence. Daniel 6:3 (KJV) – "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and the princes because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the entire realm."

Daniel was found to be the most excellent person during the reign of King Darius. He carried the excellence he had from home to the Kingdom of Babylon and then to the Kingdom of Medo-Persia.

We have seen that Daniel had profound wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and excellence. Having established that, let's look at Daniel 8:15 (KJV) – "And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man."

We can see that Daniel experienced a vision but failed to understand it. He tried hard to find out the meaning, but he couldn't. He had to seek divine help. This scenario shows how limited we are as human beings. It shows that we cannot depend on ourselves. We need to depend on God. For that reason, Deuteronomy 8:3 says, "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

The Sabbath Commandment points us to God as the Creator (Exodus 20:11). It points us to God as the Creator to make us realize that we are constantly dependent on Him.

This is the reason you cannot depend on anybody, including yourself:

Jeremiah 17:9 (KJV) – "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

The Word of God says that the human heart is deceitful, and only God can know it. The first person the heart deceives is

the owner of that heart. Ask yourself, how many times do you think you are right and you are wrong?

Numbers 23:19 (KJV) — "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall he not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" - This means that human beings lie. Human beings lie to one another, and they lie to themselves as well.

It may be challenging to make the perfect choice because sometimes sin is remarkably similar to righteousness. Ask God to instruct you on what is right. Through careful study of God's Word guided by the Holy Spirit, you will know what He requires of you, and you will be able to differentiate truth from error.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your wisdom that guides us in truth. Help us not to be deceived by appearances but to seek discernment through Your Word. Guard our hearts against the glitter of the world that leads to destruction. Fill us with Your Spirit so that we may choose righteousness over evil. Teach us to rely on You, for only You see the heart and know the truth. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Activity

1. **Read and Reflect** – Get into a small group (can be friends or family or church members) and read Proverbs 23:31-32. Discuss how the verse warns against deception.

2. **Spot the Difference** – Take a look at two similar items, one real and one counterfeit (e.g., a real and fake currency note or a genuine and fake product). Ask them to identify the differences and relate it to how the Devil disguises sin.

3. **Bible Discernment Challenge** – Write different statements, mixing biblical truths with slightly altered false doctrines. Have each person use their Bibles to determine which ones align with Scripture.

4. **Personal Reflection** – Ask each participant to write down one thing in their life that may "glitter but is not gold" (e.g., a habit, influence, or desire). Pray for God's wisdom to overcome deception.

5. Share this message with someone.

YOU SHALL COME FORTH AS GOLD

KEY TEXT: *Job 23:10 (KJV) - "But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."*

God's trials are there to boost your value. They are not meant to discourage you or do any harm to you. They are meant to purify you and elevate you.

Deuteronomy 8:16 (KJV) - "Who fed thee in the wilderness with manner, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy later end."

God took the Israelites through the wilderness before He took them to the promised land to humble them and prove them. Verse 3 of Deuteronomy 8 says that God caused the

Israelites to hunger. He did this to teach the Israelites to trust and depend on Him.

"The wilderness wandering was not only ordained as a judgment upon the rebels and murmurers, but it was to serve as a discipline for the rising generation, preparatory to their entrance into the Promised Land. Moses declared to them, “As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee,” “to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He ... suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.” Deuteronomy 8:5, 2, 3." - Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 407.1, Ellen G. White.

In the wilderness, the Israelites were in a place of isolation. They could not trade with anyone. They were in a place

where they could not grow anything. They had no other choice but to put their trust in God. If they were in a land where they could grow things or trade, they would have glorified the work of their hands.

However, God had to put them in that isolated place so that they would understand that every good thing comes from God. God fed them with manna which they knew nothing about (Deuteronomy 8:3). They did not fully comprehend how it came. In the wilderness, they experienced miracle after miracle.

Not every bad experience is a bad thing. Even when you go through a bad experience, there is always a good side to it. Nothing is one-sided. No paper has only one side. Every coin has two sides. There is always two sides to everything.

Romans 8:28 (KJV) - "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose."

"I have never seen a pleasant surgical procedure. I have never seen a delightful injection." - Pastor Randy Skeete.

"Each thing may not be good but all things combined work out for good." - Joyce Meyer.

Trust in God because God is all-powerful. Nothing is impossible with Him.

Psalm 90:1-2 (KJV) - "[1] LORD, Thou hast been a dwelling place in all generations. [2] Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."

God has always been our dwelling place. We have no reason to doubt Him. We ought to reflect on this every Sabbath day and every day of our lives.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I trust in Your refining process. Though trials may come, I know You are purifying me like gold. Strengthen my faith, help me to endure, and teach me to rely fully on You. Let me come forth shining for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

1. Write down a recent trial or challenge you have faced.
2. Reflect on how God might be using it to strengthen your faith or shape your character.
3. Find a Bible verse that speaks to your situation, memorize it, and meditate on it daily as a reminder that God is working all things for your good.
4. Share this message with someone.

JUNE

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ

KEY TEXT: *1 Chronicles 4:9-10 (KJV) – "[9] And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. [10] And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested."*

Isaiah 43:20 (KJV) – "The beast of the field shall honour Me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen." The beasts of the field honour God because God provides for them.

Philippians 2:8-10 (KJV) – “[8] And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. [9] Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: [10] That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;"

Christ is honored highly above everyone and everything else because of saving humanity through His death and resurrection.

Christ showed the highest level of humility, so God raised Him to the highest level. Myles Munroe says that "The way up is down." If you want to go up, you must go down first. In other words, you need to be humble. Matthew 5:5 (KJV) – "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.”

Having read these two verses in Isaiah and Philippians, we can see that honour is not given to anyone due to doing nothing. For one to be honored, they have to do something.

Verse 9 says that Jabez was more honourable than his brethren. He was more respected than the people around him. He was a highly distinguished man in his community.

To be honored above others, one needs to do something above what others are doing. They need to be humble and always willing to serve. They need to stand out and be more extraordinary than everybody else.

The most remarkable men and women in history who are highly esteemed are honored because they offered significant contributions in their respective fields to this world. That significant contribution came as a result of their excellent service to people.

Therefore, even though the Bible does not explicitly give a specific reason why Jabez was honored, we can conclude

that he was honored because of his outstanding service to the people around him. It is also essential to note that it is not the world that has called Jabez honourable. It is the Word of God that has given him that stupendous attribute.

Therefore, if the Bible (the highest book in the universe) called Jabez honourable, we can conclude that he lived according to the Word of God because that is the only way God can call someone honourable.

Having been honourable in the sight of God, he offered a prayer and asked for the following things:

1. For God to bless him

2. To enlarge his territory.

3. For God's hand to be with him.

4. For God to keep him from evil so that he may not experience pain.

The Bible says that God granted him what he requested. Many people wish that God would answer their prayers but don't know how to go about it.

“I have been shown angels of God all ready to impart grace and power to those who feel their need of divine strength. But these heavenly messengers will not bestow blessings unless solicited. They have waited for the cry from souls hungering and thirsting for the blessing of God; often have they waited in vain. There were, indeed, casual prayers, but not the earnest supplication from humble, contrite hearts.” – Our High Calling, Page 129, Ellen G. White.

Many envy the prayer of Jabez, and some think that it was by luck that God was able to give Jabez all that he asked for. No, it was not luck.

God gave Jabez what he asked for because Jabez lived according to God's Word. He lived a life that was different

from the rest of the world. That is why he was honored more than his brethren.

Secondly, all that he asked for was according to God's will. He asked God to bless him. God desires to bless us. That is why he gave us the Decalogue. There are rich blessings in the Decalogue, there are rich blessings in the Sabbath Commandment (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Deuteronomy 8:1 (KJV) – "All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers."

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 (KJV) – "[1] And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: [2] And all these

blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God."

God wants to bless us, so He bids us severally to listen to his voice and obey it.

“Prayer is both a duty and a privilege. We must have help which God alone can give, and that help will not come unasked. If we are too self-righteous to feel our need of help from God, we shall not have His help when we need it most. If we are too independent and self-sufficient to throw ourselves daily by earnest prayer upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, we shall be left subject to Satan's temptations.... Earnest, sincere ... prayer would bring strength and grace to resist the powers of darkness. God wants to bless. He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than are parents to give good gifts to their children. But many do not feel their need. They do not realize that they can do nothing without the help of Jesus.” – Our High Calling, Page 129, Ellen G. White.

Secondly, Jabez asked God to enlarge his territory. It is God's will to enlarge our territories. In Genesis 1:27-28, after created man, God commanded man to replenish the earth and subdue it. God punished the people building the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 because they did not want to enlarge their territory. They wanted to stay in one place (Genesis 11:4). They went against God's will.

God confused them by bringing languages so that they could be scattered to various parts of the earth. God brought languages to enlarge their territory.

Jabez prayed for God to protect him. God desires to protect us. In Exodus 14:14, He says that He shall fight for us. Jabez prayed for God to keep him from evil. God wants to keep us from evil because He is a God who is righteous and holy. Psalm 145:17 (KJV) – "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works."

Jabez prayed that he might not experience pain. God's desire is for His children not to experience pain. Matthew 11:28 says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

Jabez asked for everything according to God’s will because he knew God’s will.

Many people desire to know the will of God and to pray prayers that are according to the will of God. To understand the will of God, one needs to be acquainted with His word because God's will is in His word. God says in John 15:7 (KJV) – "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

God's Word is powerful since he has exalted it above His name. Psalm 138:2 (KJV) - "For Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name."

May God answer all your prayers!

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Dear God, I come before You with humility, asking You to bless me. I also ask You to enlarge my territory beyond what I can ask or imagine. Let Your mighty hand be with me always. Please keep me from evil and free from pain. In Jesus name, Amen.

Activity

1. **Reflect on Jabez's Prayer**

   Read 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 and meditate on Jabez's requests. Consider why he prayed for blessings, expanded territory, God's presence, protection from evil, and freedom from pain.

2. **Personalize Your Own Prayer**

   - Take a few moments to think about your own life.

- What blessings do you desire from God?
- How do you want Him to expand your territory (influence, opportunities, service, etc.)?
- In what areas do you need His protection?
- How can you align your requests with God's will?

3. **Write Down Your Prayer**

   Using Jabez's prayer as a model, write a personal prayer that reflects your needs and desires according to God's will.

4. **Pray Your Prayer Aloud**

   Once you've written it, find a quiet space and pray your prayer to God with faith and sincerity.

5. **Daily Commitment**

- Read and pray your Jabez-inspired prayer daily for the next week.
- Observe how God moves in your life and journal any insights or answered prayers.

6. **Share**

   Share this message with someone else.

KEEP MOVING

KEY TEXT: *2 Kings 7:3-4 (NKJV) – "[3] Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die? [4] If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die."*

There were four lepers. These four lepers had two options: to stay or enter the city. If they chose to remain where they were, they would die because there was nothing good happening where they were as there was a famine in the land.

The second option was to go to the camp of the Syrians. If they went to the base of the Syrians, there was a chance of them getting food, but they risked the Syrians killing them.

They weighed the two options and decided to risk their lives and go to the camp of the Syrians. They chose to risk and try than die without trying.

When they decided to move, this is what happened:

2 Kings 7:5-8 (NKJV) – "[5] And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise, no one was there. [6] For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" [7] Therefore, they arose and fled at twilight and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives. [8] And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then

they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it."

Let's look at this story carefully. Four able strong men are almost insignificant when compared to a whole nation. If they choose to fight against an entire country, the citizens of that country will likely defeat them.

These four men who decided to beat the odds and go to the Syrian camp were not even able. They were the weakest of men. They were not just the most vulnerable but also the lowest viewed.

Lepers in those days were cast out and segregated from other ordinary people. When they chose to move, the Lord magnified their steps. The Lord caused the Syrians to hear the noise of many chariots and horses.

This noise made them think they were being attacked by the Israelites, the Egyptians, and the Hittites. Instead of the Syrians killing them as they feared, they ran away from

them. In other words, a whole nation ran away from four disabled people.

Four sick and physically weak men caused an entire country with its army to flee. How did they do it? By the power of God. In Jeremiah 32:27 (KJV), God says, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for Me?”

The Syrians fled, leaving behind their horses, silver, gold, clothes, and food, among other valuable items. This story clearly shows that God honors those who make an earnest effort in their lives. It shows that God honors those who take risks because taking risks is an act of faith as long as the risk doesn't contradict God's commandments.

The Lord honors those who keep on moving in His way despite the challenges. God honors those who do their duty without making excuses. God might have revealed to you the Sabbath light but you are afraid to obey it because of the

challenges that seem to lie ahead of you. Do not hesitate to obey it. Hold God's mighty hand. Keep moving.

Proverbs 26:13 (KJV) – "The slothful man saith, there is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets." He honors those who focus on the main goal, who look up to Him for direction, trusting in Him to overcome the challenges.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (KJV) – "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." In other words, this verse means that he that does not look at the wind and clouds will sow and reap because the Bible is a book of opposites.

If you want to succeed, keep moving and pushing yourself. However, ensure that God directs you so you don't waste time doing the wrong things.

Truett Cathy started the fast-food restaurant chain which was called Chick-fil-A while in a hospital bed. What excuse do you have?

“If you can’t fly then run if you can’t run then walk if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.” – Martin Luther King Jr.

"To every man is given "his work" (Mark 13:34), the work for which his capabilities adapt him, the work which will result in greatest good to himself and to his fellow men, and in greatest honor to God." - Education, Page 138.1, Ellen G. White.

"Thus our business or calling is a part of God's great plan, and so long as it is conducted in accordance with His will, He Himself is responsible for the results. "Laborers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9), our part is faithful compliance with His directions. Thus there is no place for anxious care. Diligence, fidelity, caretaking, thrift, and discretion are called for. Every faculty is to be exercised to its highest capacity. But the dependence will be, not on the successful outcome of our efforts, but on the promise of God. The word that fed Israel in the desert, and sustained Elijah

through the time of famine, has the same power today. "Be not therefore anxious (R.V.), saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? ... Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:31-33." – Education, Page 138.2, Ellen G. White.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, please help me to keep moving in the direction that You have set before me. Take away all laziness from my spirit and instill in me Your Spirit of power, love and fearlessness. In Jesus name, Amen,

Activity

1. **Identify Your "Sitting Place"**

- Reflect on an area in your life where you feel stuck, hesitant, or afraid to move forward.
- Write it down in a journal or discuss it with a trusted friend.

2. **Set a Small, Faithful Step**
    - Like the lepers who had two choices, determine one small step of faith you can take today.
3. **Pray and Act**
    - Pray the prayer from the lesson, asking God to remove fear and give you courage.
    - Immediately take the step you've planned, trusting that God will go ahead of you.
4. **Watch for God's Hand**

- Journal any unexpected outcomes, doors that open, or ways you see God's guidance.
- Even if challenges arise, choose to keep moving in faith

5. **Encourage Someone Else**
    - As you share this message with someone else, also share your testimony or encourage a friend who feels stuck.
    - Challenge them to take their own step of faith.

JULY

LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE

KEY TEXT: *Matthew 5:16 (KJV) – "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

Our focus in the above verse will be on the word 'so.' As a bonafide child of God, it is not enough for one's light to shine. The light of a genuine child of God should shine with extra illumination. The keyword is extra. When you consider the natural world, you realize that not all lights glow with the same intensity. The sun is always brighter than the moon. Jesus understood this moon-sun illustration when He said these words because He created the world (Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:8-10, John 1:1-3 & 14).

First and foremost, who was Jesus addressing when He was saying these words?

Matthew 5:1-2 (KJV) – "[1] And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, his disciples came unto Him: [2] And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying."

From Chapter 5 (the Sermon on the Mount), we can see that Jesus was addressing His disciples as He was trying to get away from the multitude. His disciples came unto Him, but the public followed. In other words, Jesus was addressing His followers.

The Sermon on the Mount is for converted people. Jesus commanded his followers to let their light "so shine." He understood that there are other lights (because there is usually something good about everyone), but Jesus meant the light of those following Him to shine brighter than the other lights.

Matthew 5:16 is not compelling us to get into competition with others so that our light can shine brighter than theirs. It

means that you need to use maximum effort to do the best you can ever do, not depending upon your effort but depending upon God. When you do this, God is honored.

As a result, He who is omnipotent will bring His divine power in conjunction with your human effort. When infinite strength collaborates with our human weakness, inability converts into ability, and that which was once delicate becomes firm. Therefore, we change from being incapacitated to being capacitated. Countless miracles happen when we depend on the one without a beginning or an end.

Let us look at an example of what happens when human effort combines with divine power, Luke 1:36-37 (KJV) – "[36] Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also **conceived a son** in her **old age**; and this is now the sixth month for her who **was** called **barren**. [37] For with God **nothing** will be impossible." Through the power of God, Elizabeth's

condition of barrenness, which once seemed permanent (because she reached old age without a child), was changed.

God expects us to portray a character that is exceeding in righteousness. He was the initiator of excellence (Genesis 1:31 - Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good). Because God created us in His image (Genesis 1:27), He expects us to be excellent in glorifying Him.

Under God's instruction, Moses turned his rod into a snake, and the magicians did the same thing, but Moses' serpent ate all the others. Remember that there are other lights, but God expects yours to be exceedingly bright. Divine power made Moses' light shine before Pharaoh and his magicians. The Egyptians used their powers to turn their rods into snakes to show Moses that they could do the same thing that he had done. However, Moses' snake ate all the other snakes because Moses had the backing of the Almighty.

God expects us to do more than is required, especially if the gift of salvation has been acquired. Through His grace, we can move with the zeal of diehards. God expects us to follow His standard, which is extremely high that no other standard is higher. When we do this, we shall be of a righteous influence to our brethren, and since records are meant to be broken, they will seek to surpass the standards that we've set, and the whole world shall be blessed.

Therefore, let us seek to show love to our fellow men in the best possible way. Let us seek to forgive more than we usually do. Let us seek to spend more time with God on other days of the week, not just on Sabbath. Let us seek to show a degree of patience that has never been shown, a degree of joy that has never been experienced. In short, the fruit of the Holy Spirit should be seen in us more than in unbelievers because we live in a world where some unbelievers are more morally upright than regular church-going Christians.

One day when talking to my friend Steve, I told him that I've done everything that God has asked me to do. Steve responded and told me, "You can still do more." As a Christian, as long as you are alive, you can still do more.

Matthew 5:38-48 gives some Biblical illustrations of how one's light can shine before men with extra illumination.

Finally,

Matthew 5:20 – "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

"While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their

hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires. But the Pharisees rejected Christ; “being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness” (Romans 10:3), they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God." - Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, Page 54.2, Ellen G. White.

Let us practice (by God's help) righteousness that exceeds. If we do that, our efforts shall succeed. For nothing can go wrong when we keenly take heed of God's Word. For the power of God shall subdue all greed and all selfish needs. We cannot do that on our own, because in sinful nature we are born. We can only do that through total submission to God. He is the source. Let us fully depend on Him.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Dear God, please help me to will and to do Your good pleasure. Help me to obey You at all costs. Use me Lord and make my light shine so bright that through my life, people will glorify You. In Jesus name, Amen.

Activity

1. Reflect on this message and write down the lessons that you have learnt.
2. What is God telling you to do that you have not yet done? Write it down and ask God to give you the power to do it.
3. If you have done what God has told you to, prayerfully find out what more you can do.
4. Share this message with someone.

THE EXTRA MILE

KEY TEXT: *Genesis 42:22 (NKJV) - Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy', and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us."*

Reuben did not have an evil motive against his brother, but as the firstborn or the leader, he did not do much to save Joseph. He only spoke to them/suggested to them. If he were genuinely loving, he would have gone the extra mile in saving his brother Joseph.

After giving the Ten Commandments, the statutes, and sending numerous prophets to the world, Christ still went the extra mile by dying on the cross to save humanity. Sometimes speaking is not enough, and preaching is not enough. We must go the extra mile to show our brothers and sisters love.

Reuben faced the same punishment as his brothers because he did not go the extra mile. There is always a blessing in going the extra mile. The reverse is accurate. Not going the extra mile can attract a curse.

If you want to receive extra blessings constantly, you need to make going the extra mile a routine in your life. If Reuben had tried his best to save Joseph and acted on his good intentions and failed, Joseph would not have locked him with the rest of his fellow brothers. He would have given him special treatment.

Having good intentions is not enough. It would be best if you acted on those good intentions wholeheartedly. Reuben received the same treatment as the rest of his brothers because he did nothing different from the rest of his brothers, despite having good intentions.

If you want to stand out from the crowd, you need to act differently from the rest of the group. You cannot be doing

the same thing as everyone else and expect better or higher results than them. This principle is powerful in every aspect of life, business and career.

What can you add to your services/products to make them better? What can you do that the rest of the companies in your industry are not doing? What additional value can you add to your product/service? How can you go the extra mile in socializing to establish more networks than you currently have? What can you do to reach more clients than you currently have?

What can you do to bring more people to God? Going the extra mile should be part and parcel of you as your soul is to your body. Even in service to God, go the extra mile.

The bare minimum of a tithe is 10%, but there is nothing wrong if you give 11% or 20%. You may be in a situation whereby everyone is required to provide a certain amount of

contribution to a particular course in church. There is absolutely nothing wrong if you choose to contribute more.

The Sabbath is one day of the week that God requires you to give Him your time, but there is nothing wrong if you give him your time on the other days of the week.

"The longest journey is performed by taking one step at a time. A succession of steps brings us to the end of the road. The longest chain is composed of separate links. If one of these links is faulty, the chain is worthless. Thus it is with character. A well-balanced character is formed by single acts well performed. One defect, cultivated instead of being overcome, makes the man imperfect, and closes against him the gate of the Holy City. He who enters heaven must have a character that is without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Naught that defileth can ever enter there. In all the redeemed host not one defect will be seen." - Messages to Young People, Page 144.2, Ellen G. White.

Start slowly with the small steps, making one extra small step. Make it a habit to go the extra mile in everything you do.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Dear God, please help me to go the extra mile in every good thing that You have commanded me to. In Jesus name, Amen.

Activity

1. Reflect on this message and write down the lessons that you have learnt from it.
2. What has God told you to do? Prayerfully find out how you can go the extra mile in doing it.

3. Share this message with someone.

AUGUST

CONSISTENCY IN OBEDIENCE

KEY TEXT: *Genesis 39:7-10 (KJV) – "[7] And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." [8] But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. [9] There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" [10] So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her."*

Usually, when people narrate this story, they convey it to imply that Potiphar's wife requested Joseph to sleep with her once. However, as we can see in the above verses, she did not request him once. She pleaded with him several times. Joseph refused when she asked him to sleep with her for the first time. She did not give up (the devil never gives up). She kept speaking to Joseph daily, as stated in verse 10. She insisted continuously, but Joseph never agreed.

Most of us can resist temptation if it comes to us only once. However, we cannot resist temptation if it comes to us repeatedly. Professor Robert B. Cialdini, in his book Psychology of Persuasion, mentions consistency as one of the powerful principles of persuasion.

Potiphar's wife was consistent and persistent. She might have tried various ways of getting Joseph attracted to her and getting him to sleep with her (the succeeding methods being more lucrative than the preceding methods). If she wore a

particular garment one day to seduce Joseph, she would wear a better one the next day.

In Matthew chapter 4, the devil did not give up on the first temptation; he brought one trick after another, and the succeeding temptation always seemed more lucrative than the preceding one.

God operates the same way. When God brought plagues to the Egyptians during the time of Moses, the plague that would follow would be more lethal than the previous plague. The devil always copies what God does (because he knows God's methods are robust and infinite, and he cannot devise his strategy since his very life depends on God). Despite her persistence in attempting to lead Joseph to sin, Joseph was consistent in obeying God and keeping His commandments.

When God allowed the devil to take away everything that Job had, including his wealth, his family, and lastly, his health, Job showed consistency in obeying God. He showed

character when facing the most painful situations, despite his wife advising him to curse God and die. Joseph behaved the same way. Despite the persistence of Potiphar's wife in attempting to lead Joseph to sin, Joseph was consistent in obeying God and keeping His commandments.

You may be jobless for ten years, and after those ten years of suffering, you finally get a job offer that needs you to work on Sabbath. You refuse that offer because you have chosen to obey God. While still jobless, you continue getting more job offers of the same sort. Will you still follow God's commandments?

In one of his sermons, Pastor Mark Finley gave a compelling story of his dad. His dad was not Adventist, but he converted when he heard the Adventist message. Mark's dad lost his job and started looking for a new job. He got rejected from all jobs because he told them he couldn't work on Sabbath. After facing numerous rejections, he was accepted by a

Jewish company because they were delighted that he kept the Sabbath just like them.

Mark's dad worked for the Jewish company and thus, he made the company profit. It reached a time when he was able to start his own company doing the same business, and eventually, he was able to buy the Jewish company that he had previously worked. Matthew 20:16 (KJV) – "So the last shall be first, and the first last".

Nothing is lost when you obey God. There are abundant blessings in obeying God. Situations may seem challenging at the moment, none favoring you, but always remember that you serve a faithful and just God.

You may follow God and face severe trials. Those trials are blessings in disguise. "But in the providence of God, even this experience was to be a blessing to him (Joseph)" – Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 219.2, Ellen G. White. James 1:2-4 (KJV) – "[2] My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall

into divers temptations; [3] Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. [4] But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

As a child of God, don't bow down to affliction because there are more incredible blessings following your adversity. Deuteronomy 8:16 (KJV) – "Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;" God caused the Israelites to suffer in the wilderness knowing that He was going to do good to them in the end.

Psalm 106:3 (KJV) – "Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times."

Practice righteousness at all times.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your unwavering faithfulness and for the strength You provide to stand firm in righteousness. Help us to follow Joseph's example of obedience, resisting the temptations that come our way, no matter how persistent they may be. Grant us the courage and consistency to obey Your commands and trust in Your perfect plan for our lives. May we always remember that in the midst of trials, You are working all things together for our good. Strengthen our faith, and help us to live with integrity and perseverance. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

1. Reflect on a time when you faced a temptation or a difficult situation that challenged your faith. Write

down how you responded and what helped you stand firm.

2. Think about an area of your life where you may be facing persistent temptation or pressure to compromise your beliefs. Write a short prayer asking for strength and consistency, just as Joseph demonstrated.
3. Share your reflections and prayer with a friend, family member, or group to encourage one another in remaining faithful to God.
4. Share this message with someone.

ALL THAT HE HAS

KEY TEXT: *1 Chronicles 29:10-11 (KJV) – "[10] Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever. [11] Thine, O Lord is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all."*

"True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence. With this sense of the Unseen, every heart should be deeply impressed." - The Faith I Live By, Page 39, Ellen G. White.

Do we truly understand who God is? God will forever be our Father as He is our Creator. As children of God, He promises an everlasting relationship. Since He is our father, we get to be part and parcel of who He is and inherit all He owns. We inherit His greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty. We

get to inherit both heaven and earth. We get to inherit His eternal Kingdom.

"Jehovah is the fountain of all wisdom, of all truth, of all knowledge." - The Faith I Live By, Page 39, Ellen G. White.

God is the fountain of every good and righteous thing. James 1:17 says that every good and perfect gift comes from God. Your earthly father or mother can give you the priciest piece of bread but it will still be imperfect because it is made by man's imperfect hands.

When God gives you a gift, the gift He has given you has been designed and crafted by His perfect mind and perfect hands. Thus, the gift He has given you is perfect and He wants you to depend on Him to make perfect use of it.

The Sabbath that God has given us is perfect as it is blessed by Him. We should take it as a perfect gift and not try to form another imperfect Sabbath.

When God gave us Jesus Christ, He gave us a perfect gift. Before God gave us Jesus, he would require a spotless lamb for sacrifice. However perfect the lamb would appear to be, it was not even nearly as flawless as His Son Jesus. By giving us Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, He gave us the most perfect and priceless gift.

Romans 8:32 (AMP) - "He who did not spare [even] His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?"

God wants to bless us more than we want Him to bless us. He is more desperate to bless us than we are to receive the blessings. The question is, how do we access God's blessings?

Luke 15:31 – "And He said unto him, Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

Like the elder son, we must always be with God to access eternal blessings. Therefore, we should submit to Him every moment and make sure that we are always connected to Him.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Oh Lord, how great Thou art. You are the Creator and Sustainer of every good and perfect thing. From You flows victory, power and majesty. You have the whole universe in Your hands. Thank you for giving us Your Son Jesus Christ that through Him we may inherit the richest blessings that you have in store for us. Lord, I surrender my life to You. Please be my guide in everything that I do. In Jesus name, Amen.

Activity

- Write down the attributes of God and what they mean to you.
- Write down the gifts that God has given you in your family and thank Him for them.
- Write down the gifts that God has given you as an individual. Thank Him for them as well.
- What would you want God to give you? Write it down and commit it to prayer daily.
- Share this message with someone.

IN HIS HAND

KEY TEXT: *1 Chronicles 29:12 (NKJV) – "Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all."*

Let's look at the phrase "in your hand." God holds power in His hands. In His hands, He has the provision to make someone tremendous and the ability to give strength to someone, both mental strength and physical strength.

John 3:16 (KJV) - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

What does the word 'only' mean in John 3:16? It means that God gave all that He has. God is a generous God.

Romans 8:32 (KJV) – "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

God's generosity is incredible because He is willing to give us everything, and since He is a generous God, He will release everything He has to us if we are faithful to Him. Not just material gifts but also spiritual gifts, which are more important than the material because the spiritual produces the material.

Isaiah 58:13 (NKJV) - “13 If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the Lord honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, 14 Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken."

"The Sabbath ... is God's time, not ours; when we trespass upon it we are stealing from God.... God has given us the whole of six days in which to do our work, and has reserved only one to Himself. This should be a day of blessing to us—a day when we should lay aside all our secular matters and center our thoughts upon God and heaven." - In Heavenly Places, Page 152.2, Ellen G. White.

"But while we worship God, we are not to consider this a drudgery. The Sabbath of the Lord is to be made a blessing to us and to our children." - In Heavenly Places, Page 152.3, Ellen G. White.

We shall witness more of the mighty hand of God when we keep the Sabbath day holy. We shall see more of God's power on our lives when we follow Him, when we obey His commandments.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank You for holding all power in Your hands. You are the source of strength, provision, and every good thing. Help me and teach me to trust You, knowing that You freely give to those who seek You. Help me to honor You in my life, and make me witness more of Your mighty hand at work. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

- Take a small piece of paper and write down something you need strength for, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual.
- Then, place the paper in your open palm and pray, acknowledging that God's hands are greater than yours.

- After the prayer, release the paper into a safe place (like a Bible or a prayer journal) as a sign of surrendering your needs into His mighty hand.
- Reflect on this act throughout the week, trusting that God will provide.
- Share this message with someone.

SEPTEMBER

OF THINE OWN HAVE WE GIVEN THEE

KEY TEXT: *Chronicles 29:14 (KJV) – "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."*

Let's look at the first part of the verse:

"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer willingly after this sort?"

First,

We should understand that having what we have now is a privilege. It is also a privilege to give back to God because

giving back to God enables us to be part and parcel in fulfilling God's great purpose.

Secondly, giving back to God assures us blessings. It ensures us an increase in what we already have. Proverbs 11:24-25 (KJV) – "[24] There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty. [25] The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself."

Therefore, count it all joy when you can give back to God. And who can give back to God? Everyone alive. Because no one lacks something to offer.

The last part of the verse reads, "for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

"All that man receives of God's bounty still belongs to God. Whatever God has bestowed in the valuable and beautiful things of earth is placed in the hands of men to test them—to sound the depths of their love for Him and their

appreciation of His favors. Whether it be the treasures of wealth or of intellect, they are to be laid, a willing offering, at the feet of Jesus; the giver saying, meanwhile, with David, “All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.”" - Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 753.1, Ellen G. White.

All things come from God. Therefore, when we return tithes and offerings, we do not do God a favor as many think. We are giving to God what belongs to Him.

When we serve God through our various talents, we are not doing the Creator and the Savior a favor. We are giving Him what is rightfully His. When we spend time with God on the Sabbath or on any other day, we are doing what we ought to do because time belongs to God.

Giving back to God is a way of showing gratitude. It tells God, "Thank You for this talent that You have given me",

"Thank You for these resources that You have given me," or "Thank You for making me alive and giving me this time."

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for all that You have given me. Please help me to use it for Your glory and for the blessing of Your people. In Jesus name, Amen.

Activity

- Prayerfully ask God how you can use your time to glorify Him.
- List your talents and abilities and ask God how you can use them to glorify Him.
- Ask God how you can use your money and other resources to glorify Him.

- Share this message with someone.

TESTING THE HEART

1 Chronicles 29:17 (NKJV) – "I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness."

God tests the heart, and He delights in uprightness.

Job 1:1 (NKJV) – "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil."

Now God put Job to the test by allowing Satan to take everything from him. Satan took his property, his children and his health. God allowed this to happen because He was putting Job on a test. God was testing if Job would still be upright despite the trials. God was trying Job's heart to see if He would still hold firmly to Him after the devil took everything away from him.

Deuteronomy 8:2 (KJV) – "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the

wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no."

"The fact that we are called upon to endure trial proves that the Lord Jesus sees in us something very precious, which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name He would not spend time in refining us. We do not take special pains in pruning brambles. Christ does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He tests." - Counsels for the Church, Page 54.6, Ellen G. White.

God led the Israelites through the wilderness experience to test their hearts. He wanted to know if they truly loved Him. If they will still obey Him amidst the trials.

Sometimes when life trials come to you, it is not because you are the worst sinner. Like Job, you may be a perfect and upright man, but God is trying to test your heart. You may be

God's peculiar treasure, just like the Israelites, but God has chosen to test your heart.

You may have been faithful in returning the tithes and offerings and still undergoing challenging financial situations. You may be steadfast in church and believe in God to heal you of a particular illness, but it's getting worse instead of getting better. You may lose your job or an opportunity because of keeping the Sabbath and stay for a while before getting another job or opportunity.

Don't lose hope; trust in God. The promises that He has set forth for you, through His word, are sure. Isaiah 55:10-11 (KJV) – "[10] For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: [11] So shall my Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." The promises God has

given you will be accomplished in your life if you don't give up. Be persistent in your Christian journey because God tests the heart and has pleasure in uprightness.

"The Lord in His providence brings men where He can test their moral powers and reveal their motives of action, that they may improve what is right in themselves and put away that which is wrong. God would have His servants become acquainted with the moral machinery of their own hearts. In order to bring this about, He often permits the fire of affliction to assail them that they may become purified." - Counsels for the Church, Page 54.7, Ellen G. White.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your love and wisdom in guiding my life. I know that You test the hearts of Your children and take

delight in those who walk uprightly before You. Just as You tested Job and led the Israelites through the wilderness, I trust that my trials are not meant to destroy me but to refine me.

Lord, give me the strength to remain faithful when my faith is tested. Help me to hold fast to Your promises, knowing that Your Word will never return void. Purify my heart, remove anything that is not pleasing to You, and mold me into the person You desire me to be.

Even when I do not understand my trials, let me trust that You are in control. May I stand firm in righteousness, knowing that You take pleasure in an upright heart.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

- Write down a difficult situation or trial you are currently facing.
- How does knowing that God tests the heart and delights in uprightness change the way you view your trials?
- Ask yourself: How is this trial testing my heart? What attitudes, fears, or weaknesses is God revealing through this?
- Read **Job 1:1, Deuteronomy 8:2, and 1 Chronicles 29:17** and reflect on how these verses apply to your situation.
- Write one promise from the Bible (such as Isaiah 55:10-11) that gives you hope in your trial.
- Identify one way you can remain faithful in this trial (e.g., continuing in prayer, maintaining integrity, trusting in God's timing).

- Pray and surrender your situation to God, asking Him to refine your heart and make you stronger in faith.
- Share this message with someone.

HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV) – "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

The above verse means that there is no temptation that is too difficult to overcome and that there is no temptation that is outside this world. All temptations we are facing have been faced before, and some of the people who encountered them were able to overcome them.

God, in His faithfulness, will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can. Take note that it is the Devil who brings temptations, not God.

James 1:13 (KJV) – "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." It is Satan who brings temptation. However, God understands the point of weakness in every man and cannot allow the Devil to tempt someone beyond what that person can overcome.

God cannot allow someone who has less spiritual strength to face the same test that Job faced or the same temptation that Jesus encountered after fasting in the wilderness. The reason is that God does not want us to sin.

God doesn't take delight in sin. However, He allows us sometimes to face temptations to strengthen our faith, to remember that we are in a sinful world, and to keep our focus on Him. When we lose focus on God, is when temptations defeat us.

Let us look at the first temptation.

Genesis 2:16-17 (KJV) – "[16] And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: [17] But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

All commandments of God are easy to obey. 1 John 5:3 (KJV) – "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."

When we look at Genesis 2:16-17, the instruction given to Adam and Eve was the most simple to obey. Of the thousands of trees God created, they were free to eat all of them except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was such a simple instruction to keep. That is the same way God has created seven days a week, freely giving you six days to do your work but asking for only one, which is the seventh day. It is also the same way God gives you income to control and asks you to return to Him only 10 percent.

Let's find out where the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was located:

Genesis 2:9 (KJV) – "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was located at the garden's center, right next to the tree of life. The tree of life represented life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented death (because God told them if they ate from it, they would die). However, they chose death over life, which is the same case with us today.

We neglect and despise the ways of life and choose the paths of death. The same way God planted the tree of life close to the tree of knowledge of good and evil is the same way that the power to fight temptation is right next to us.

Revelation 3:20 (KJV) – "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

When someone is knocking at your door, where is that person? That person is right outside the door. This verse means that Jesus has moved right next to us; our work is to allow Him to come into our hearts. If Jesus dwells in us, He will assist us in fighting temptations, including the ones the enemy has lied to us that are 'too difficult.

One of the reasons we find some temptations too challenging to overcome is because we have practiced them for such a long time that they have become part and parcel of our character. But Jesus, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, will restore us to the highest, perfect condition that we need to be, no matter how long we have struggled with sin.

In John 5:1-15, there was a man who had been sick for 38 years, and next to him was a pool called Bethesda. An angel came to the pool at a particular season, and if anyone entered the pool when the angel came, they would be relieved from what they were suffering. Take note that 38 years is quite a long time to be sick, 38 years is a long time to be an alcoholic, 38 years is a long time to be gay, 38 years is a long time to be addicted to pornography, 38 years is a long time to be in prison.

John 5:6 (KJV) – "When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?" Jesus asking the man this question meant that the man had the option to choose whether he wanted to be healed or not.

John 5:8-9 (KJV) – "[8] Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. [9] And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked."

Jesus healed the man, but notice He healed him because the man was willing to be healed. What shows that the man was ready to be healed? The fact that he arose, took up his bed, and walked meant that he believed since he did exactly as Jesus had told him to do. With his power, the sick man could not do that. Jesus did all the work (which was healing him), his job was to believe, and the best way to show that he believed was by doing everything Christ had told him to do.

A good number of Christians look at God's Word as a far-fetched idea. Pastor Randy Skeete says that we see Jesus as only existing in the pages of the Bible and not a reality in our lives.

Many Christians believe living a perfect and holy life is impossible, while Christ has made it possible and easy for us. Christ is therefore asking us, "Wilt thou be made whole?" You need to say YES and ensure that YES is coming from your heart, and you will be surprised by what God will do in your life.

Are you struggling with a specific sin in your life? Ask Jesus to help you overcome it. Jesus does not care how long you have been in it. His work is to restore you to your perfect condition, and He will do that.

So far, we have established the following things:

- There is no temptation you can face that is out of this world. All temptations faced are common to man.
- There is no temptation that God can allow you to meet that is beyond your spiritual strength.
- With any temptation you face, there is always a way of escaping.
- The power to fight and resist temptation is right next to us.
- Our work is to believe that Jesus can help us overcome temptation and leave our worries to him.

How do we fight temptations?

Pray: Luke 22:40 (KJV) - And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

We should pray against temptation daily, and every time we are faced with temptation.

Put serious study to the Word of God daily: In Matthew 4, while the Devil tempted Christ. Jesus answered him, "it is written," "it is written," "it is written." Meaning Jesus knew the Word of God. The same way the Devil tempted Christ with the Word of God is the same way some people may compel you to sin by taking the Word of God out of context.

The Devil can use the Word of God in a deceiving way to tempt us because he knows the Word of God has power. If you do not know God's Word, you will quickly fall into those temptations. The Word of God has infinite power and is the power to overcome all sorts of the enemy's tricks.

"**A Law in Intellectual and Spiritual Worlds**—It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by

beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence." – Mind Character and Personality, Volume 1, Page 331.1, Ellen G. White.

The more you interact with God's Word, the more your life will be transformed by its power and influence. Do everything that you can to stay close to it. When you are waiting for the train or the bus or when you are in an airport waiting for your flight and you don't know what to do, open the pages of the Bible or a truthful Christian book. Read your Bible in those moments that you feel like idling or challenge yourself to commit certain verses to memory. Once again, do everything that you can to stay close to it.

"Commit to studying the Word of God daily, when you wake up, meditate on what you have studied in the morning as you carry out your duties of the day, then just before you sleep, go back to what you had studied. You will realize that you

have started losing interest in worldly things gradually. Not overnight but gradually" - Pastor Randy Skeete.

MAY GOD GIVE YOU THE POWER TO FIGHT TEMPTATIONS!

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your faithfulness in every trial. I acknowledge that temptations will come, but I trust in Your promise that I will never face more than I can bear. Strengthen me to resist sin and to take the way of escape that You provide. Fill my heart with Your Word so that I may stand firm, just as Jesus did. Help me to keep my focus on You and rely on Your strength, not my own. Thank You for Your grace and power to overcome. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

1. Identify a temptation you struggle with.
2. Find at least three Bible verses that directly address that temptation. (Example: If struggling with fear, use 2 Timothy 1:7 – "For God has not given us a spirit of fear…").
3. Write these verses down on a card or save them on your phone.
4. Whenever you face the temptation, read the verses out loud and pray for strength.
5. Over time, this will help renew your mind and make it easier to overcome temptation.
6. Share this message with someone.

OCTOBER

THE GOD OF OVERFLOWING BLESSINGS

KEY TEXT: *Luke 10:2 (KJV) – "Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest."*

This verse means that the blessings of the Lord are so many, but the people who want to receive them are few. The Lord wants to bless you in excess, but the devil wants to steal those blessings.

In Mark 5:1-20, there is the story of Jesus healing a man with over 2,000 demons (legion) in him. That man was very wild, and people often ran away from him. The devil wants you to be in a state like that or even worse than that. John 10:10

(KJV) – "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." God wants the best for you, but Satan wants the worst for you. However, most people choose to follow Satan rather than God.

From the days of Noah to the days of Lot, to the days of Jesus on this earth, to this day, God has never had the majority of people doing what's right. In Genesis 18:24, Abraham asked the Lord if He would destroy Sodom or spare it if He found fifty righteous people in it. God said that He would spare it. From verse 25 to the end of the chapter, verse 33, Abraham kept reducing the number from fifty to ten. As Abraham continued reducing, God promised to spare the whole city if He found just a few righteous people in it.

We often paint God as this cruel person who always wants to punish us. What does the Bible say about that? Micah 7:18 (KJV) – "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of

His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy." God finds joy in showing mercy. He is not a punisher even though sometimes He is compelled to punish.

We offend God from time to time, but He never gives us the punishment that we deserve. Even when He punishes, He will do it from the point of love, and there will still be blessings in that punishment.

"And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man's lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God's great plan of man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin." – Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 60.1, Ellen G. White.

One of the reasons why a majority of people are reluctant to live a righteous life is because they think life with God is

boring and full of suffering. Many believe that if you serve God, He will not bless you here on earth. They think an obedient life on earth is only relevant if one wants to go to heaven. Many believe it will take a long time for Jesus to come back. Therefore they choose to live a disobedient life in the meantime with the hope of changing their character in the future.

A good number of youths who rebel against God's commandments do it in the name of 'enjoying their youth,' believing in the deceptive and disastrous slogan of YOLO, 'you only live once.' Many of these youths will tell you that they plan to live a noble life once they get old. Unfortunately, some fail to reach that old age.

In the above quotation we see that God rendered the punishment to Adam and Eve with love to make them better human beings.

This doctrine of God's commandments is only relevant for one to go to heaven has caused many Christians to be reluctant in their faith. Are the commandments only relevant if one wants to inherit eternal life?

Let's see what the Bible says.

Mark 10:29-30 (NKJV) – "[29] So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, [30] who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions and in the age to come, eternal life."

Deuteronomy 28:1 (KJV) – "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth."

Notice the last phrase of Deuteronomy 28:1. It says that God will set you on high above all nations of the earth. God wants you to succeed in this life and the afterlife.

We've already seen the state that the devil wants you to be in. Now let's look at the state God wants you to be in.

Let's look at the first example:

Job

Job 1:1-3 (NKJV) – "[1] There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. [2] And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. [3] Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East."

Job 1:9-10 (NKJV) – "[9] So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? [10] Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land."

We can see that God had blessed Job in all things here on earth. The Lord had blessed Job with a good family, perfect health, and great wealth. Being a righteous man meant that despite being incredibly blessed on earth, Job would have access to eternal life. Satan also recognized that it was God who had given Job those blessings when He told God, "Have you not made a hedge around him?"

Let's look at another example:

Abraham

Genesis 13:2 (KJV) – "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold."

Genesis 24:1 (KJV) – "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things."

Genesis 13 was Abraham's account before Isaac's birth, and Genesis 24 was Abraham's account after Isaac's birth. In Genesis 13, God blessed Abraham materially, but he lacked a child. In Genesis 24, Abraham was blessed materially and with children and old age.

Isaac

Isaac was in a foreign land with famine, and people in that land suffered. Let's see what the Lord did to him:

Genesis 26:3-4 (KJV) – "[3] Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; [4] And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will

give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

First, God promised Isaac that He would bless him. Did God fulfill that promise? Let's find out:

Genesis 26:12-14 (KJV) – "[12] Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him. [13] And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: [14] For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him."

Your country's economy doesn't have to thrive for God to bless you financially. God can decide to bless your finances even when your country or the whole world is going through a recession. God can bless you and your family with perfect health when the entire world is facing a pandemic, and everyone else has contracted it.

God does not care that it's January and everyone is broke. He can give you high-paying clients for your business that January. God does not care that your country has the highest unemployment rate. He can give you a high-paying job despite the high unemployment rate.

Behavioral scientists will tell you that for success in your area of expertise, you need more than seven years of experience or the 10,000-hour rule. That rule may be applicable in most instances but not in all cases because there are people who have had double that experience and are not yet successful. It is possible to start a business now and reach a billion dollars within a year if you have a vision and commit that vision to God. Everything which your human mind thinks is impossible, is possible with God.

John 14:12 (KJV) – "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father." Jesus said if you believe in Him, you will do more

extraordinary things than He did while He was in this world. One of the works Jesus did while on this earth was raising the dead; I wonder what can be greater than that. If we believe in Him, we can do more incredible things than that.

A life that Jesus has taken complete control of is a blessed life. It doesn't mean that when you are a Christian, you won't face problems, you may still encounter problems because you are in a sinful world, but you shall reduce most of the issues you are facing. Below are some examples to help you understand how God can bless your life if you fully commit it to Him.

1. The last (tenth) commandment says you should not covet your neighbor's property. Many people get depressed because their friends have something they don't have. Many relationships fight daily because a neighbor has something they don't have. Covetousness is a serious issue that many have committed suicide due to coveting. Numerous people

are living above their means, taking loans, and going bankrupt due to coveting. If you can obey God and ask Him to help you not to covet, you will be surprised by the load of suffering that will be off your shoulders.

2. God has given us a commandment not to steal. If you disobey that commandment and cheat on your exam papers, you may get caught and face two semesters or two years of suspension from school, thus delaying your graduation. If you had obeyed God, that wouldn't have happened. Some may argue that they've always cheated and never been caught.

   One may cheat on exams, fail to get noticed, and graduate with the highest score. By virtue of their remarkable school results, they get a job but fail to perform on the job because they have very little or no knowledge; what happens later is they get fired from the job. You can cheat on exams and fail to get caught

but carry on the same corruptible practices in your workplace hence landing you in big trouble that you may end up imprisoned. If you had obeyed God, you wouldn't have met all that.

3. God has said that you should not lie. Someone may ask you something, and maybe he had an opportunity for you, but you lie to him, closing your door to that opportunity.

4. God has said in Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." This means that whatever you do, no matter how small it is, do your best. If you can do things like that in your workplace or your business, you will have provided a lot of value to those you are serving; hence, it won't be easy for them to find your replacement. If you disobey that and carry out duties in a mediocre way, you will have no significance; therefore, replacing you will be easy.

5. God has called upon children to honor and obey their parents in the Lord. As a little child, your mother tells you to stay away from fire, but you fail to observe and get burnt.

6. God has instructed us to love our enemies, forgive them, and pray for them. If you fail to do that, you start holding grudges in your heart. And since man's heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9), you will always meet people who will offend you. Imagine having hatred and holding a grudge against all those people. One can have a lot of heaviness in their heart, leading to depression.

7. God has instructed you not to kill. Killing is not just killing someone's physical body. Killing can be in the form of insulting others and discouraging them. Because once you do that, you have killed their hopes in life. And you may be preventing someone who

God has destined to be of great benefit to you in the future.

8. The Bible says in Proverbs 20:1 (KJV) – "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." How many families have been wrecked because of a drunk spouse? How many people have fallen from being the wealthiest in their societies to the begging level due to drinking? How many people have wrecked their health due to drinking?

9. Proverbs 20:4 (KJV) – "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing." This verse means that a lazy man always gives excuses. For example, some might say that they can't do something about their finances because there is the Corona Pandemic and there are no jobs. If you follow God's Word and believe in Him, you will push yourself to do

something despite the circumstances because you are serving a God who is above all situations.

10. The fourth commandment commands us to keep the Sabbath day holy. God understands that we need rest, and He wants us to rest. When we work seven days in a week instead of six as God has said, we become less productive than we ought to be. However, when we work for six days and rest on the seventh, our minds get refreshed by the power of God. Therefore, we become highly productive on the forthcoming week.

Everything written in the Bible is for our benefit. Praying, reading the Bible, and following what it says is for your benefit, not God's. Most Christians think that by carrying out such practices, they are benefiting God. We are not helping God. We are benefiting ourselves.

God loves us so much that He gave us guidelines for living a blessed life. Where are those guidelines? Those guidelines are in the Bible. Take note that when you pray, you are talking to God; when you read the Bible, it is God speaking to you.

Few people in the world are successful, and very few, almost none, are what can be called genuinely successful because success is not just having a lot of money, as many people portray it to be. Success is being blessed in all things, meaning all areas of your life, from your family to your friends, your associations, your health, and your finances.

This is why few people are fully blessed:

Jeremiah 17:5-6 (KJV) – "[5] Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. [6] For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh;

but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited."

What does putting trust in man mean?

Putting trust in a man is putting trust in yourself, putting trust in your parents, trusting your siblings, trusting your friends, putting trust in your spouse, and even trusting your pastor or priest. You should love them but do not trust in them more than you trust in God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (KJV) – "[19] What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? [20] For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The Bible says that you do not belong to yourself. If you don't own yourself, how can you trust yourself or anybody else more than God?

Why shouldn't you put your trust in yourself? Jeremiah 17:9 (KJV) – "The heart is deceitful above all things, and

desperately wicked: who can know it?" The Bible says that man's heart is deceitful. The first person that the heart starts deceiving is the heart's owner. Therefore, lying to oneself is common among human beings. Imagine this: you have been yourself all your life but still don't understand yourself fully.

This is another example; most times, you think that you like something, then when something else comes up, you end up liking the latter and hating the former, and you won't understand what made you change your preference. Another example is that many of the things you know about yourself are not something you discovered. They are things that others have told you. How many times have people given you compliments about you that you knew nothing about? So if you don't fully know and understand yourself, how then can you trust yourself?

In Acts 12:21, Herod gave a powerful speech, and the people were astonished by that speech and said, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man."(Acts 12:22). Instead of Herod giving

glory to God, he took the credit to himself, in other words, he put trust in himself. What did God do? God sent an angel to kill him immediately (Acts 12:23). In Daniel 4:30, King Nebuchadnezzar was proud and acknowledged his power to have built Babylon to be extremely great. In verse 33, God humbled Nebuchadnezzar, immediately making him eat grass like the animals in the field.

In Luke 23:27-39, when Jesus was going to be crucified, He was mocked severally by people telling Him to prove that He is the Son of God. They challenged Him to save Himself from the situation he was facing. Jesus had the powers to do that, but He did not do that. Remember, He restored the ear of one of the guards who Peter had cut off.

In verse 27, a great multitude of people bewailed and lamented Him. In verse 35, the rulers mocked Him and said, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He be Christ, the chosen of God." In verses 36 and 37, the soldiers mocked Him, telling Him to save Himself. In verse 39, one of the

criminals hanging with Christ mocked Him. The pressure Christ faced just before His death was immense and intense. When faced with such anxiety, the carnal mind would have tried to prove to others that He is indeed the Son of God because the carnal mind loves to uplift itself.

Despite the mockery and insults, Jesus did not obey them because obedience to them would be disobedience to God. Heeding them because they had put him under great pressure would mean that He is keeping His trust in them and not in God. By doing that, the plan of salvation would have failed, and God would doom all of us. That is what the Bible means when it says, "cursed is the man who puts his trust in man."

Ask yourself, how many times have you felt embarrassed to carry the Bible openly because you are afraid of what your friends will say? How often have you deceived your friends that you don't go to church to look fabulous before them? How many times have you been convicted on an altar call

but waited for people to start going in front so that you could get the courage to go?

This is another reason you shouldn't put trust in anybody above God.

1 Corinthians 13:12 (KJV) – "For now we see through a glass, darkly."

Glass is a representation of an object blocking you from seeing something directly. Imagine yourself outside a house that has no window. You will be able to see the contents of the house directly; On the other hand, imagine yourself outside a house with a window; you will be able to see the contents through the window but not directly. Spectacles may enhance your vision, but still, with them, you won't be able to view objects directly; you will be viewing them through the spectacles even though your vision is enhanced. While in the dark, you can barely see anything because there is minimal or no light.

1 Corinthians 13:12 gives us this symbolistic view on not just seeing in the dark but seeing in the dark through an object blocking you from seeing directly. This verse means that as humans, our sight is limited to a great extent, and if our eye is limited, our vision is limited, which means that everything else is limited. Therefore we cannot trust our minds or anybody else's because we have finite minds. Why then don't we put our trust in the one who created our minds? That is why 1 Corinthians 5:7 says we should walk by faith, not sight.

Let's look at a perfect example of how man is limited. In the times of Daniel, there came a King called Darius. In Daniel 6, Darius was pleased with Daniel, and therefore Darius made Daniel one of the three presidents. However, he preferred Daniel above all the Presidents and Princes because Daniel had an excellent spirit (Daniel 6:3). This caused Jealousy among the others and therefore they sought to destroy Daniel.

Since they could not find fault in his work, they decided to find a spot in him concerning the law of his God (Daniel 6:4-5). They created a decree that no one should worship any other god besides the King. Therefore they tricked the king into signing the order. Darius being a pagan king (loving self-exaltation as is common to the carnal mind), agreed, not knowing the dangers disguised in that decree. Therefore, Daniel's enemies found Daniel praying as usual, and Daniel had to be thrown into the lion's den.

The King was so displeased by this and wished he could deliver him, but it was impossible (Daniel 6:14-15). Take note that in those days, Kings were mighty, and there was no democracy. The Medes and Persians had defeated the Babylonian Kingdom and thus taken over, meaning Darius was a powerful man. However, with his power, he could not defend Daniel. He could not restrain Daniel from being thrown into the lion's den. Why? The reason is that he was limited because he was a mere human being. How many

times have you had friends and relatives in powerful positions that you expected to be of help to you but haven't been? Cease putting your trust in man.

The question is, why should you put your trust in someone whose vision is limited? And who is that person whose vision is limited? The answer is everybody, including you. Does that mean you should disrespect them? Does that mean you should hate them? Definitely not! The Bible doesn't say that. Does that mean you shouldn't follow their advice? If their counsel corresponds and aligns with "Thus saith the Lord," FOLLOW IT. If not, DO NOT FOLLOW IT, because it may lead you to destruction. Ephesians 6:1 (KJV) says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." The key phrase here is "in the Lord" if it is not in the Lord, then it is a sin, and God hates sin. Allow those guiding you to guide you (because they have experience and knowledge that you may not have), but the guidance should be in line with what the Bible says.

This is the reason;

David was a righteous man, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), and pleased the Lord in his life. However, he gave out an evil instruction for Uriah to be kept on the army's frontline so that he could get killed and therefore take his wife. The same evil thing that David did (of which he later on repented) is the same thing your church pastor, priest, or even the pope can do because they are all human beings just like him.

2 Chronicles 20:20 (KJV) – "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." The Bible says, believe in the Lord your God FIRST. After you have believed in Him, then believe His prophets. The Bible does not say to believe His prophets before believing in God. Take another microscopic look at the words in that verse. You will notice that the word 'in' has been included in the phrase "Believe in the Lord your God" part. In the "Believe his prophets" side, there is no "in,"

meaning you need to believe His prophets, not believe in them. In other words, believe the words that Jeremiah, Isaiah, or any other Godly prophet is telling you and believe that they were/are sent by God but don't believe in the prophets as themselves. Don't worship them. Instead, believe in God and that God is in them.

Many people were once very religious but turned out to be atheists. If you look closely at some of these people, they did not read the Bible on their own. They did not foster an individual relationship with God. They depended only on what their pastors told them (which is what most Christians do till now, few Christians study the Bible on their own). Their pastors might have been telling them the right things, but the lack of reading the Bible resulted in little spiritual maturity.

A good and truthful pastor can be likened to a good teacher who understands his subject and teaches it well. However, many students fail in classes with the best teacher because of

not doing self-study. A good and truthful pastor can also be likened to a good gym instructor. You can't gain muscle and lose fat just by watching a gym instructor. You must do the workout yourself. The gym instructor is there to guide you to ensure that you are doing the workout right, but they will not do the exercise for you.

If you pray and study the Bible on your own, you develop spiritual maturity and strength because you are feeding on God's Word directly. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you understand what you don't understand. You may seek other people's perspectives during Bible study because the Lord gives different people diverse revelations but don't exchange that with studying the Bible on your own. Always ask the Holy Spirit to provide you with discernment while seeking that advice because you are seeking it from an earthly vessel (to make you discern between truth and error).

Who, then, should you put your trust in?

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (KJV) – "[7] Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. [8] For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

Why should we trust God? These are the reasons:

GOD IS OUR CREATOR

Genesis 2:7 (KJV) – "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Genesis 1:26-27 (KJV) - "[26] And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. [27] So God created man in

His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

The first reason why we should trust God is that He created us. The person who understands a vehicle or an electronic device the most is the manufacturer, especially the one who is hands-on in manufacturing it. The hands-on one understands the components of the device and how they work. He understands it more than the company's CEO that makes the device. The CEO understands the operations of the company and the business aspect of that company. Genesis 2:2-3 tells us that creation is God's work which He has made. In other words, God is the CEO and the hands-on person. He understands the operations and the business side and how each microscopic component in His creation works. Creation is not God's work which He delegated or was assisted to do; it is His own work which He has made. That is enough reason to trust Him. A car cannot drive nor repair itself. It needs someone to drive it or repair it. Perhaps one

may argue that nowadays, we have driverless cars. Driverless cars cannot move if someone doesn't execute the driverless commands and if someone doesn't command its destination. We are like cars. Let's allow God to drive and repair us.

GOD CAN NOT LIE

Numbers 23:19 (KJV) - "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall he not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

God can't lie. Men lie from time to time.

In conclusion, how then do we get God's blessings?

We get God's blessings by trusting in him. How do we show trust in him? We portray faith and love to God by obeying Him.

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 (KJV) – "[1] And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: [2] And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God."

Verse 1 says, "all His commandments" the keyword in this phrase is 'all,' not some, i.e., the ones you like or are comfortable doing. The Bible says all. What will the Lord do to your life if you observe all His commandments? Verse 1 God promises that He will set you on high above all nations of the earth. In verse 2, He says, "All these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee." If you give your all to God, He will give His all to you. 1 Samuel 2:30 (KJV) - "For them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."

Newton's third law of motion states, "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." In this case, what is the action? Obey all of God's commands. What is the equal and opposite reaction? All the blessings will come to you.

Hebrews 11:8 (KJV) – "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

In the above verse, let's look at the word 'after.' Take note that for Abraham to have received the place for an inheritance, he had to obey God and go to that land (a land he knew nothing about; he just went there by faith). If he hadn't followed God, he would not have received the land as an inheritance. There is a blessing in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV) - "[5] Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

We can conclude if you disobey God, what you are simply doing is running away from His blessings.

God loves you, and He wants to bless you. STOP running away from His blessings!

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for being God. Thank You that you are a God of overflowing blessings. Thank You for the blessings that You have already given me and everyone else in the world. Thank You that You want to bless me more than I want You to bless me. Please help me to align with Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

Activity

1. Reflect on this message. What have you learnt? Write it down.
2. Write down the blessings that God has already given you.
3. Write down the blessings that you want God to give you and pray over them.
4. Share this message with someone.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD'S LAW

KEY TEXT: *Psalms 19:7-11 (KJ21) - "[7] The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. [8] The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. [9] The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. [10] More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. [11] Moreover by them is Thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward."*

The Law of God is Perfect

Psalms 19:7 (KJV) – "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

The law of God is perfect, meaning it has no mistakes.

"God's law is the transcript of His character. It embodies the principles of His kingdom. He who refuses to accept these principles is placing himself outside the channel where God's blessings flow." - God's Amazing Grace, Page 141, Ellen G. White.

The law of God revives the soul, calling us to righteousness and pointing us to the need for total surrender to Jesus Christ, who fulfills the law and transforms us through His grace."

The law of God is Pure, and it enlightens the eyes

Psalms 19:8 (KJV) – "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."

The law of God is right, and in its righteousness, it gives joy to the heart. A life following God's law 100% is very happy and satisfying.

The commandments of God are pure, meaning they contain no impurity or corruption.

The purpose of the commandments of God is to enlighten the eyes. Darkness, or rather evil, has caused much confusion among people. The purpose of light is to do away with that confusion because God is not an author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Failure to keep the commandments of God will darken and blur your vision. People perish where there is no vision (Proverbs 29:18).

When your eyes are not enlightened, you will not know the right way, you will not know where you are going, and thus it will be dangerous because you may fall into a deep and dangerous pit.

The phrase 'enlightens the eyes' also means to add more knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

One of the reasons you do not have much knowledge, wisdom, and understanding is because of sin. Sin blocks you

from getting all these. Proverbs 2:6 (KJV) – "For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." The phrase 'out of His mouth' means His words.

Through the Word of God, you get wisdom, knowledge, and understanding; the law of God is among the words that proceed directly out of the mouth of God. Eyes being enlightened means that God will add light to your vision. One of the reasons why you do not know your purpose in life and live according to it is because of sin. Sin blocks all that.

Do away with sin in your life (with the help of Christ), and you will discover your purpose. You will not see opportunities if your eyes don't have the light. Sin blocks you from seeing opportunities, most of the opportunities being too near and obvious. Do away with sin; your eyes will be more open, seeing more opportunities.

The law of God is everlasting

Psalm 19:9 (KJV) – "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

The fear of the Lord is clean. It contains no dirt in it. And what is the fear of the Lord? Hebrews 11:7 (KJV) – "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Noah portrayed the fear of the Lord by obeying God's Word. To fear God is to obey His word. His commandments are His words. The fear of the Lord is not only clean, but it endures forever.

Obedience to God was there before sin. Obedience to God will still be there in the new world. Revelation 22:14 (KJV) – "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they

may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Isaiah 66:23 (KJV) - "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord."

The Sabbath, which is one of the commandments of God shall still be kept in our glorious home. This means that all commandments of God will be observed eternally, for there will be no sin in the new heaven and the new earth.

The law of God is true and righteous

Psalm 19:9 (KJV) – "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous. The reason why they are true is that they are from the source of truth and righteousness. John 14:6 (KJV) – "Jesus saith unto Him, I

am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." Psalm 145:17 (KJV) - The Lord is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works.

The law of God is desirable and sweet

Psalm 19:10 (KJV) – "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

The commandments of God are to be desired more than the finest gold. Gold and all worldly riches will one day perish, but the Word of God will be there forever because it is that Word that created Heaven and earth and all that is in them. This truth is portrayed in Genesis 1 which repeatedly says, "And God said."

1 Peter 1:25 (KJV) – "But the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which is preached unto you by the gospel." Psalm 119:160 (KJV) – "Thy Word is true from

the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever." Matthew 24:35 (KJV) – "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away."

God's commandments can bring riches (Deuteronomy 28:1,4,5) because all spiritual and material riches were created by God's Word. Riches cannot bring God's commandments.

The commandments of God are sweeter than honey. Most Christians believe it is impossible to keep God's commandments fully. The majority of Christians believe that it is not possible to live a sinless life. The Bible clearly says that the commandments of God are sweet.

Something sweet is something easy. Something cannot be sweet and difficult at the same time. 1 John 5:3 (KJV) – "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." They are not grievous means that they are easy to keep.

The Law of God has great rewards

Psalm 19:11 (KJV) – "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in the keeping of them there is great reward."

The commandments of God are used to warn us. Also, there is great reward in keeping the commandments of God. What are some of the rewards/blessings of keeping the commandments of God? Read Deuteronomy 28:1-13 (Here, the rewards/blessings of obeying God are listed).

Proverbs 14:34 (KJV) – "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Obeying God exalts you as a nation and as an individual. Here is a practical example, if the leaders of nations practice righteousness and shun evil practices like corruption, the economies in various countries will thrive. If you have opened a business and practice righteousness by being honest in your dealings, your clients will trust you and thus come to you repeatedly and they will

refer more people to you. Thus you will have high customer retention and acquisition.

Therefore aim to serve God and do all that is right in His sight, meaning you need to do exactly what God has told you to do. Don't just obey the commandments you find comfortable to obey. Do not only obey when the situation favors you. Matthew 4:4 (KJV) – "But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Surrender your life completely to God and ask God to save you from all sin; with His power, He will do away with all sin in your life. His cleansing is more powerful than all detergents combined. It puts you in the right state of mind and has the power to open the eyes of the blind.

Therefore, in your daily walk in life, you need to have it at the top of your mind. It is a tremendous guide that has been granted to all mankind. In it, all principles of life are defined

and meticulously designed. Obedience to God's law gives you happiness and unfathomable peace of mind.

May God give you the grace, power and courage to obey Him.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Dear God, Thank You for Your perfect law that revives my soul and guides my steps. Help me to delight in Your commandments, to see their beauty, and to live in obedience to them. Enlighten my eyes, Lord, so that I may walk in righteousness and avoid the pitfalls of sin. Fill my heart with joy as I follow Your ways, and grant me the strength to obey You fully. May Your Word be sweeter to me than honey and more precious than gold. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

Daily Scripture Meditation & Obedience Challenge

- **Choose one commandment or principle from God's law** (e.g., honesty, kindness, Sabbath rest, love your neighbor).
- **Write it down and meditate on it throughout the day.** Ask: How can I apply this in my life today?
- **Act on it.** Consciously practice that commandment in your daily interactions—whether at work, school, or home.
- **Journal your experience.** At the end of the day, reflect: Did following God's law bring peace, joy, or clarity? What did you learn?
- Do the same for the other commandments.
- Share this message with someone.

SUCCESS LESSONS FROM THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

KEY TEXT: *Matthew 25:14-15 (KJV) – "[14] For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. [15] And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey."*

Let's focus on the words 'to another.' This phrase means that we have all been gifted differently. No one in this world has nothing; likewise, no one has everything. The total number of talents given was eight. The master could have as well given those eight talents to only one of them and left the others with none, but he did not do that. Let's look at another Bible extract that uses the phrase 'to another. 1 Corinthians

12:8-10 (KJV) – "[8] For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; [9] To another faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; [10] To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."

In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, different gifts of the Spirit are listed, and everyone is given a different gift.

The question is, why have we been given different gifts? The answer lies in Matthew 25:15 – "To every man according to his several abilities." The master knew the servants well and gifted them according to their abilities. Is God unfair when He gives people different abilities? No, He is not. He has given us different abilities so that we can complement each other and associate with one another.

The Bible says in Genesis 2:18 (KJV) - "It is not good that the man should be alone." This means that it is not good for a person to lack social support. God wants us to socialize. God wants us to associate with one another. He commands us to rest on the Sabbath day together with all that are in our household, including all animals (Exodus 20:8-11). Thus, the Sabbath offers a tremendous social institution. God highly values the life of a human being. He expects us to love one another, as He loves us (John 13:34-35, John 15:12, 1 John 3:16-18, 1 John 4:11).

That is the same thing with God; He has given us different gifts. He has also given us different situations. Let us remember that the situation that He has currently put us in is the best situation. Some people have been gifted with the drive and energy to work hard. Others have been given great inborn talent in a certain course of pursuit. Others have been gifted with higher reasoning capabilities, others have been

gifted with great knowledge, and others have been born into royal families or families that possess great wealth.

We have established that we have been gifted with several talents according to our different abilities. The question is, why have we been given these gifts? The answer lies in 1 Corinthians 12:7 (KJV) – "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." We have been given the gifts we possess to bless others.

When we bless others, our lives in turn will be blessed. God is going to increase what we already have. A simple example is, when you share what you have studied from the Bible with someone, that person may in turn add more knowledge concerning what you have shared. Thus, your Biblical knowledge will be increased. God wants us to increase what we have.

How, then, do we increase what we have?

Do Everything to the Glory of God

1 Corinthians 10:31 (KJV) – “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

We do that by doing everything to the glory of God. Seek to glorify God in everything that you do.

The reason is that you don't own yourself; God owns you (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). And how do you glorify God? You glorify God by avoiding sinful practices in your activities and carrying out Godly practices in everything you do. This is what the word ‘whatsoever’ means in the above verse. You must glorify God in your exams. Therefore, avoid cheating in all its forms, including helping others with answers.

You need to glorify God in your marriage, therefore, do not put your kids or your relatives above your spouse because the Bible says the two of you are one (Genesis 2:24, Ephesians 5:31). You should glorify God in your workplace, therefore, work as if God is seeing you and not your earthly

master (Ephesians 6:5-7). You have your own company and have employed people; you need to treat those people in a way that glorifies God. And how do you do that? Ephesians 6:9 (KJV) – "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

Do not exploit them by overworking them and underpaying them. Do not treat them unfairly. Do not look at them as employees. Look at them as potential candidates for the Kingdom of God. View your clients/customers the same way.

As you seek to glorify God, you must also seek to be a blessing to others, Philippians 2:3-4 (KJV) – "[3] Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. [4] Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

“There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man that lives unto itself. No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground but ministers to some other life. There is no leaf of the forest or lowly blade of grass but has its ministry. Every tree and shrub and leaf pours forth that element of life without which neither man nor animal could live, and man and animal in turn minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf. The flowers breathe fragrance and unfold their beauty in blessing to the world. The ocean, itself the source of all our springs and fountains, receives the streams from every land but takes to give. The mists ascending from its bosom fall in showers to water the earth, that it may bring forth and bud.” – The Desire of Ages, Page 20.2, Ellen G. White.

God did not create anything for itself. He devised everything to serve something else. If you look at the Ten Commandments, the first four is love for God, while the last six is your love for fellow men. No commandment attributes service to yourself.

Do Your Best

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (KJV) – “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

The verse says in whatever you do, do your best. If we combine 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Ecclesiastes 9:10, we get to understand that for you to do something to the glory of God, you need to do your best in what you are doing. If you do something in a mediocre way, you are harming yourself and misrepresenting God.

You have to do your best in all you do except sin because sin is not to the glory of God. Does that include washing dishes? Yes, it does. Does that include washing your house? Yes, it does. One of the reasons why people don’t do their best is because they despise the work they are doing. For example, “I’m just a lawnmower; I will start doing my best when I get

an office job." Or "I'm just a barber or a hairdresser; I will start doing my best when I own a barber shop or a beauty parlor." Or "There is no need to dress properly now. I will dress well when I get a job or become a millionaire ."

The Bible gives you a valid reason why you must do your best, and the reason lies in the same verse, Ecclesiastes 9:10 – “For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” This is a powerful reason. In other words, the Bible says that you must do your best while you are still alive.

Whatever your hand finds to do, as long as it is not sinning, do it in the best way possible, in a way that no one else can do. This principle is highly applicable in today's world. If you do your best, it will be difficult to lose your job as it will be hard to find your replacement.

You have probably seen ladies who are very particular about their hair being done by a specific person. If they go to the

salon and that person is not available, they will postpone doing their hair. The main reason is that the salonist is doing their best in making their hair. Men are also very loyal to their barbers. Now that we have learned how to increase what we already have, the question is, did the servants increase what their master gave them?

Let's go back to the parable:

Matthew 25:16-18 (KJV) – "16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money."

We can see that the first two servants doubled their talents, and the last one did nothing with his talent. He went and buried it in the ground.

The reason why the one given one talent did nothing with it was due to the following reasons:

Fear

Matthew 25:24-25 (KJV) – "[24] Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: [25] And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine."

The servant, who was given one talent, feared losing it. He thus went and hid it in the ground.

Fear, shyness, and all sorts of phobias are from the devil. When Adam and Eve were sinless, there was no fear. Fear came through sin. The devil uses fear to make you sin. The devil understands that your life is so precious to you, which is why he threatens your life, causing you to sin because you are frightened.

Job 2:3-4 (KJV) – "[3] And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. [4] And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life."

Satan told God that Job would be ready to give anything if his life was threatened. He falsely thought that Job would lose his trust in God and disobey Him if Satan threatened his life. However, Job proved the devil wrong as he remained steadfast amidst his tough situations.

How, then, do we cast out fear?

John 4:18 (KJV) – "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

Love is portrayed by obedience to God's commands, all summarized in loving God and loving your neighbor. If you obey God 100%, you will have no room for fear. Obedience to God is proof that you believe in God. There is no way you can say you believe in God, yet you don't do what He has told you to do. Many people think believing is just an emotion or mere words. Believing is living. Your lifestyle needs to reflect God.

Other verses about trusting in God:

Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV) – "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

The problem is that we lean on our own understanding instead of applying faith. Again, another problem with us is we trust God half-heartedly while the Bible says we need to trust God whole-heartedly. Notice again that the above verse

has reckoned us to acknowledge God in all we do, meaning nothing should be excluded.

Do you acknowledge God before you cook? Do you seek God before you buy clothes? Do you pray before you shower? Do you ask God for His guidance and protection before you hit the Gym? Do you ask God to guide you before you buy a new car? Do you dedicate yourself to God before you drive? Do you acknowledge God before you talk to a friend? Acknowledge God in all you do, and the results will be astounding.

Psalms 37:3 (KJV) – "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." When we trust in God, God assures us that He will feed us.

Psalms 56:4 (KJV) – "In God I will praise His word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." When you trust God, you should not fear what another

human being or animal can do to you because God is the Creator of all flesh and all creation.

Timothy 1:7 (KJV) – “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” A fearful mind is not a sound mind.

Joshua 1:9 (KJV) – “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” Always remember that as a child of God, the Lord is with you always.

Daniel, Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego were great because they did not fear losing their lives while being thrown in the Lion’s den or the fiery furnace. They chose to trust in God.

Don't be comfortable in your fears. Seek God to eradicate your fears.

Other quotes about facing your fears:

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do." - Eleanor Roosevelt

"Fear is the path to the Dark Side. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering." - Yoda

"The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." - Nelson Mandela.

"The key to change... is to let go of fear." - Roseanne Cash.

"Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. The fearful are caught as often as the bold." - Helen Keller.

"One of the greatest discoveries a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn't do." - Henry Ford.

Despising the Little

The third servant despised that one talent. He went and buried the talent in the ground. Something that you bury is something dead, and something dead is something useless. He felt that the talent given to him was too little and nothing could be added to it.

Most of us despise the little that we have and wish that we would have more like our neighbors. We tend to think that if we had more, we would do more. Sometimes God tests you by giving you little, and if you prove faithful in the little He has given you, He will give you more. Luke 16:10 (KJV) – "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

If God cannot trust you with the least He has given you, how do you expect Him to trust you with more? If the bedsitter you live in is always untidy, how do you expect God to trust

you with an 8-bedroom mansion? You never tithe your 200-dollar salary; why should God trust you with a 200,000-dollar salary?

You are the type of person who succumbs to peer pressure easily, always being led to sin through the influence of friends. How do you expect God to make you a multinational corporation leader if you can't lead your friends? Jeremiah 12:5 (KJV) – “If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”

When you trust in God and dedicate all you have to Him, He will multiply greatly the little you possess. David was a young shepherd with only a sling and a stone. On the other hand, Goliath was a mighty, gigantic, and experienced Philistine warrior fully armed with many soldiers behind

him. David killed Goliath with the little he had and caused the whole Philistine army to flee (1 Samuel 17).

Jesus fed a multitude of five thousand people with two fish and five loaves of bread. Jesus fed everyone to their satisfaction, and twelve baskets of food remained (Matthew 14:13-21). Little is much when God is in it. Much is useless when God is not involved. Therefore, do not despise the little that you have.

You are in high school; are you despising the little pocket money your parents give you? Don't look down on it because greatness can come out of it. You are earning a salary that you think is 'too small and probably think there is nothing much you can do with it, dedicate that salary to God and ask Him to provide you with ideas on multiplying it. People say that they do not have enough capital to start a business yet have unknowingly wasted millions in the bar drinking alcohol.

Let’s look at other examples of how little turned out to be great:

Elijah

1 Kings 17:9-34, God commanded Elijah to visit a widow in Zarephath, and Elijah obeyed and visited her. Elijah told the widow to give him bread. Let's see what the widow answered: 1 Kings 17:12 (KJV) – “And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”

The widow was telling Elijah that the bread they had was little and would be suitable for only one meal (have in mind there was drought and famine in the land). 1 Kings 17:13-16 (KJV) – “[13] And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and

bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. [14] For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. [15] And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. [16] And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the Word of the Lord, which He spake by Elijah."

We can see that after the widow obeyed God's Word, which He had commanded her through Elijah, her house was filled with food, and they did not hunger all the forthcoming days.

Moses

Exodus 4:1-2 (KJV) – "[1] And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. [2]

And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod."

The only thing that Moses had in his hand was a rod and he was not aware of the wonders that God could do with that rod.

Let's see what God did:

Exodus 4:3-4 (KJV) – "[3] And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. [4] And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:"

God was able to turn out the rod into a snake. Notice the verse says that Moses fled from his rod which God had turned to a snake. You will be astonished of what God can do with the little that you have when you dedicate it to Him.

Let's look at Moses again:

Exodus 4:10 (KJV) - "And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."

Moses underestimated his ability to speak. Let's see what God told him:

Exodus 4:11-12 (KJV) – "[11] And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? [12] Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

Are you disabled and thus despising yourself because of your disability? Don't let that disability push you down. Trust in God, and He will lift you.

Let's continue with the parable of the talents:

Matthew 25:19 (KJV) – "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them."

Let's examine the phrase *after a long time*. The master came after a long time, meaning he had given the servants enough time to multiply what they had. Jesus has also given us a long period of grace to repent and come to Him; therefore, we will have no excuse if we fail to do so.

Let us see what the Bible says about time; Ecclesiastes 9:11 (KJV) – "I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." Time and chance happened to the three servants. None could say that they did not have enough time or opportunity to do what they were supposed to do.

You are in school and have all the time to study from the first week of the semester; why wait till the last minute to study for your exam? The average man and the most successful man have two common factors: time and chance. Yes, some people may be more intelligent, but you do not need the

highest level of intelligence to be where you want to be. You do not need the greatest level of talent to succeed. Ask God to show you how to use what you have and how to use your time wisely and effectively.

After the master returned, he did not ask them collectively what they had gathered. He asked them individually what they had gathered, one after the other (Matthew 25:20-24). God deals with us individually; God created Adam first, then caused Adam to sleep, then created Eve.

The last/tenth commandment commands us not to covet our neighbors' property because God deals with us individually. Numerous people think Christianity can be inherited from their parents. They think that being born into a Christian family automatically makes them Christians. On the day of judgment, God will deal with you as an individual, not as a family or as a group of friends.

God is a God of justice and fairness; if the master came and asked them collectively what they had gathered, the servant with one talent would mix his talent with the others and ride on their success. What are you doing for your life? Are you waiting for your parents to die so you can inherit what they have left? Are you waiting for your brothers to succeed so you can borrow money? Are you basing your success merely on marrying a rich husband or wife? Are you the type who blames the government for your failure?

This is what he said to the first and second servants who multiplied what they had in verses 21 and 23 of Matthew 25:

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

The two servants proved faithful in small things; therefore, the master made them rulers in many things.

Let us see what the master told the one talented servant:

Matthew 25:26 (KJV) – “His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed.” This means that the servant knew what his master required of him. Most of us know what the Lord needs us to do, but we choose to disobey. Likewise, most of us know what we need for our lives to be successful, but we do not do that. We choose to do the opposite.

Matthew 25:27 (KJV) - “Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.” The master gave the servant the easiest solution that he could have done. The solution that we need for success is not hard. It is simple and right within our reach.

Matthew 25:28-29 (KJV) – “[28] Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. [29] For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have

abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

"Nobody is so poor he has nothing to give, and nobody is so rich he has nothing to receive." – Pope John Paul II.

The master gave the servants talent according to their abilities. In other words, he knew their abilities and had in mind what they were able to do with their various talents. If he gave the one-talent servant five talents, he would have done nothing with it; therefore, the profit would be zero. God blesses you according to your ability to handle that blessing.

Some people will marry many wives if God gives them a lot of money. Others will use their wealth to step on others, and God knows that. He blesses you according to your ability and does that out of love. God may not have given you great wealth because He does not want you to die from HIV/AIDS or other Sexually Transmitted Diseases. He may be waiting for you to change your ways first before He blesses you.

God may be waiting for you to have a spirit of humility and submission before He gives you a husband because He does not want that house to crumble. Whatever situation God has put you in is purely out of love. God loves you more than your parents love you; He loves you more than you love yourself. That is why sinners will not enter heaven, because they will be very uncomfortable in that environment, and God, in his mercy, cannot allow that.

Wishing you great SUCCESS as you read this article!!!!

MAY GOD MAKE YOU SUCCESSFUL!

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the gifts You have placed in my hands. Help me to use them boldly, faithfully, and with excellence. Let all I do be for Your glory. Teach me not to fear small

beginnings or hide what You've given me, but to multiply it through faith and diligence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

- Write down the talents or gifts that you know you have (e.g., drawing, speaking, organizing, encouraging others).
- Set one small action you can do today to grow or use your talent for God's glory.
    - *Examples:*
        - Draw a scripture-based art piece and share it online.
        - Encourage someone who's down with a kind message.
        - Organize a space and thank God while doing it.

- **Pray over that action** and do it **without fear**, even if it seems small.

- Share this message with someone.

NOVEMBER

HOW TO MAKE A BLESSED DECISION

KEY TEXT: *Deuteronomy 30:19 (KJV) – "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."*

Poem

Whether you do this or that, the choice is yours,

Just ensure you don't get into something that has no cure,

You can be a lawyer, doctor or an entrepreneur,

Or anything else, as long as you take a road that's sure.

Whether you decide or not, a choice has already been made,

You have two coats, not choosing blue, you end up wearing the red,

Taking too much time to get up, you end up staying in bed,

Uncertainty creates bad decisions, don't take unnecessary time in your head.

"**Men of Action** — The cause of God demands men who can see quickly and act instantaneously at the right time and with power. If you wait to measure every difficulty and balance every perplexity you meet, you will do but little. You will have obstacles and difficulties to encounter at every turn, and you must with firm purpose decide to conquer them, or they will conquer you." - Christian Leadership, Page 50.1, Ellen G. White.

"Sometimes various ways and purposes, different modes of operation in connection with the work of God, are about

evenly balanced in the mind; and it is at this very point that the nicest discrimination is necessary. And if anything is accomplished to the purpose, it must be done at the golden moment. The slightest inclination of the weight in the balance should be seen, and should determine the matter at once. Long delays tire the angels." - Christian Leadership, Page 50.2, Ellen G. White.

Deuteronomy 30:19 (KJV) – "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you." Since God is a just God, he uses witnesses in all His dealings. Since He is a righteous God, even without witnesses, He will still fulfill whatever He says. In this scenario, He does not use heaven only lest we say He has biased it since it is His dwelling place. He does not use earth only because we are

sinful and corrupt and may alter or deny His word. Therefore, He calls upon heaven and earth to bear witness.

He goes on to state the free will that He has given us. He has given us a choice between life and death, blessing and cursing. Many of us view the commandments as harsh restrictions meant to please God and restrain us from having fun. We consider our righteous actions to benefit God, and we barely see how they can help us. In its natural inclination, the carnal mind wants to do what it pleases. It does not want to subject itself to orders from anyone.

Philippians 2:20 says, "For I have no man likeminded who will naturally care for your state." As Paul speaks to the saints at Philippi, he tells them that no one he knows will naturally care for them. The keyword is naturally. He uses the word naturally to mean that no human being in their sinful natural state will care for anyone else except themselves.

Jeremiah 13:23 (KJV) – "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." The Holy Bible does not say that the leopard's spots or the Ethiopian's skin cannot be changed. They can be changed. However, the leopard and the Ethiopian do not have the power to change them because only God can do so. God, who created the human heart, can change it. This understanding that we can change nothing in our lives by our power shows that we are limited. That is the reason we should humble ourselves.

Most of us view the commandments as burdensome. This shallow and narrow view of God's commandments and our defiance of them causes us to lose many blessings from God. Following only the part of the commandments we like and not the whole gives us partial benefits and deprives us of full blessings from God. It restrains God from working miraculously in our lives.

Each commandment has a blessing. God is faithful to the extent that even when an atheist obeys one of His commandments, He receives the blessing of that commandment. Hebrews 11:31 (KJV) – "By faith, the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not when she had received the spies with peace."

God tells us in Deuteronomy 30:19 that He has given us the will to choose between life and death. God understands that life is complex, unpredictable, and full of mysteries and has given us divine instructions. If we follow those instructions, we shall be a peculiar treasure unto Him above all people (Exodus 19:4-5).

God has shown us the path to prosperity and life. He has shown us the way and provided light upon that way (Psalms 119:105). However, we must walk that way. He cannot walk on our behalf.

Deuteronomy 8:1 (KJV) – "All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers." Satan has deceived us that the commandments are harsh restrictions that are impossible to keep while they are meant for life and prosperity. Failure to keep them is hurting ourselves.

1. When we eat unclean meats, disregard the health laws, and justify that the health laws were only meant for the Jews. It is our health we are destroying, not God's.

2. When we get married to people of different beliefs with the justification that “love knows no religion.” It is the quality of our marriage lives that we are reducing. The negative effects of that action may or may not be seen when the two of you are dating but they will surely be seen once you get into marriage.

3. When ladies dress inappropriately with selfish ambition and justify it with "God looks at the heart", they may deprive themselves of quality husbands. Such may attract men who want nothing else from them besides sex.

4. Men get frustrated when their wives fail to submit to their leadership because their leadership has failed as they have failed to lead by example. They give orders in their houses for people to live by. Orders that they don't fully believe in because if they fully believed in them, they would live by them.

5. When we fail to keep the Sabbath, we deny ourselves time to rest, reflect and focus on the one who has given us the power to create wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18). As a result, we work extremely hard and receive minimal or no wages. If we had given that time to God, He would have blessed us with divine

ideas and strategies that would multiply our income exponentially.

6. When we cheat on exams, we deprive ourselves of the knowledge of whatever course we study. Some people who complain that there are no jobs don't have adequate knowledge to carry out the job they seek.

7. When we cheat on our spouses, we deprive ourselves of the quality of that marriage. We start treating our rightfully ordained partners with contempt and end up saying marriage is a scam.

8. When we mistreat people, we may be blocking ourselves from opportunities. Those people we mistreat now may benefit us in the future, and because of our unrighteous actions, they fail to assist us when we need them.

Why do the wicked prosper? Or why do unbelievers prosper? Sometimes unbelievers thrive because we have failed to do our duty as prophesying Christians.

Hebrews 11:28 (KJV) – "Through faith, he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." If the Israelites had not kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, God would kill their firstborns as He did to the Egyptians. God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11).

God allowed pagan nations to take the Israelites to captivity because the Jews disobeyed. Daniel 1:1-2 (KJV) - "[1] In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. [2] And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god."

Daniel 1:1-2 tells us that God delivered the King of Judah together with everyone in that kingdom and the vessels of His house to Nebuchadnezzar's hand." In this case, God trusted Nebuchadnezzar (a pagan king) more with the vessels of His house than he trusted Jehoiakim. Some unbelievers are better stewards than professing Christians. Some unbelievers are better leaders than some Christians.

Sometimes Christians are punished more than unbelievers because we are responsible for giving God a bad name. We profess we are Christians but live like demons, hence taking the Lord's name in vain. And God's name ends up getting tarnished.

Many Christians complain that they pray all the time and constantly go to church, but their lives are still the same, always stagnating. Praying and going to church are not enough. We must do God's duty and live by every Word that proceeds from God's mouth (Deuteronomy 8:3).

We always pray for blessings and breakthroughs. All the blessings we need have been set right before our eyes. The Word of God says in Psalms 1:2, "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of God and in His law doth he meditate day and night."

1. We pray to God for success in our marriage but follow ungodly counsel on marriage.

2. We pray to God for success in our business but follow ungodly advice on business.

3. We pray to God for success in our health but break the health laws appointed to us by God.

Faith without action is dead (James 2:20). Whatever we are praying for, we have already been given. We have to portray faith by living according to God's Word. We must constantly engage ourselves with spiritual activity if we pray for spiritual growth. God will see our effort and bless us with spiritual growth.

God has given us the ability to do whatever we want to do. He only comes in to help us accomplish what we cannot. He cannot do the work for us, lest it becomes a waste of the gifts He has given us. Whatever qualities we are looking for in a spouse or a friend, we need to cultivate those qualities in ourselves first because you attract what you are.

God is saying that He has set before us life and death, blessing and cursing. God has given us the right to choose between a prosperous and non-prosperous life. Unfortunately, most of us choose death, we choose curses, and we decide not to prosper. In His love, God goes ahead to tell us what to choose. Deuteronomy 30:19 says, "Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

"**Hesitant Leadership is Weak Leadership** — It is even more excusable to make a wrong decision sometimes than to be continually in a wavering position; to be hesitating, sometimes inclined in one direction, then in another. More perplexity and wretchedness result from thus hesitating and

doubting than from sometimes moving too hastily." – Christian Leadership, Page 50.3, Ellen G. White.

"I have been shown that the most signal victories and the most fearful defeats have been on the turn of minutes. God requires promptness of action. Delays, doubtings, hesitation, and indecision frequently give the enemy every advantage." – Christian Leadership, Page 50.4, Ellen G. White.

God has done His part. We have to do ours. Let us be quick in making the right decisions.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

You have set before me life and death, blessing and cursing. Teach me to choose life daily.
Give me the courage to obey Your Word, the wisdom to

discern Your will, and the strength to walk in the path You have laid out for me. May my choices honor You, bless my future, and uplift those around me. In Jesus' name, I choose life, Amen.

Activity

1. **Stand in front of a mirror** and look at yourself.
2. **Say aloud**:

   "Today, I choose life. Today, I choose to follow God's way, because His way leads to blessing, peace, and purpose."
3. Then, **write down one decision** you're facing (big or small), and ask:

   ➤ Does this align with God's Word?

   ➤ Will this lead to blessing or harm?

➤ What would choosing life look like in this decision?

4. Take a step that reflects life and obedience — no matter how small.
5. Share this message with someone.

A TEACHABLE SPIRIT

KEY TEXT: *Matthew 5:5 (KJV) – "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."*

True humility always has a blessing. It has benefits in this life and in the life to come. The difference between you and the problem you are facing is what you don't know. Therefore if you acquire the knowledge you are missing, you will be able to overcome the problem you are facing. The more you learn, the more you earn.

Many assume because they are grown-ups and probably have reached a certain level of success, they cannot be taught. As a result, this leads to stagnation. Some people cling to traditional practices so much that new beneficial methods have less room in their lives. A good example is you have studied about the Sabbath and are convinced of the Sabbath message, but since you were brought up not keeping it, you decide to continue living that way.

Which kind of people are we supposed to learn from in society? Is it only rich and famous people? Remember that sometimes the person to lead you to your next level in life isn't always a renowned successful person whom you highly esteem. Be careful with the people you look down upon. They may have the keys you need to unlock doors in life. Innumerable people in life only take advice from people whom they regard as successful.

While on this earth, Jesus was poor (2 Corinthians 8:9) but He had the most incredible message ever. He had the words of eternal life (John 6:68). John the Baptist lived in the wilderness and ate locusts but was great in the sight of God.

"After the ascension of Jesus, doctors, lawyers, priests, rulers, scribes, and theologians listened with astonishment to words of wisdom and power from unlearned and humble men. These wise men marveled at the success of the lowly disciples and finally accounted for it to their satisfaction from the fact that they had been with Jesus and learned of

Him. Their character and the simplicity of their teachings were similar to the character and teachings of Christ. The apostle describes it in these words: "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence (1 Corinthians 1:27)." – Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, Page 378.1, Ellen G. White.

John C Maxwell, in his book, "The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth," says, "Have a beginner's mindset. If your attitude is like that of a beginner, you have no image to uphold and your desire to learn more is stronger than the desire to look good".

In the same book, on page 250, John C. Maxwell says, "If you're going to ask questions and allow yourself to fail, then you will at times look foolish. Most people don't like that. Do you know what my response is? Get over yourself! As

Roger von Oech says, "If we never tried anything that might make us look ridiculous, we'd still be in caves." Instead, we need to be more like children. The thing I love about young children is that they just ask. They don't worry if a question is foolish. They just ask it. They don't worry about whether they will look dumb trying something new. They do it. And as a result, they learn. Richard Thalheimer, the founder of the Sharper Image, says, "It's better to look uninformed than to be uninformed. Curb your ego and keep asking questions." That's great advice."

Luke 18:16-17 (KJV) – "[16] But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. [17] Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

Unlike adults, children are usually humble and teachable. They recognize that they don't know and are open to learning

more. Jesus says whoever doesn't receive the kingdom of God with humility as a little child cannot enter.

Proverbs 16:18 (KJV) – "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

"It is your work, my brother, to humble yourself and not wait for God to humble you. God's hand at times bears heavily upon men to humble them and bring them into a proper position before Him; but how much better it is to keep the heart daily humbled before God. We can abase ourselves, or we can build ourselves up in pride and wait till God abases us." – Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, Page 378.3, Ellen G. White.

Therefore, let us learn to be humble and embrace a teachable spirit.

Matthew 11:29 (KJV) – “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

I thank You for the blessing that comes with meekness. Today, I ask for a heart that is humble, open, and eager to learn. Remove from me every trace of pride and help me recognize the wisdom You place in unexpected people and places. Just as Jesus was meek and lowly in heart, help me walk in His footsteps and receive Your truth with the simplicity of a child. Teach me daily, Lord, and mold me to reflect Your character.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

1. Get a small notebook or dedicate a section in your journal titled “Ask & Grow.”
2. Each day for the next 7 days, write down:
    - **One thing you learned** from someone unexpected (e.g., a child, a colleague, a stranger, or a sermon).
    - **One question you’re curious about** (spiritual, practical, or personal).
    - **One action step** to grow in that area (e.g., read a verse, ask a mentor, or try something new).
3. **At the end of the week**, reflect on how being teachable helped you see God’s hand in new ways.
4. **Bonus Activity:** Ask a trusted friend or spiritual mentor this question: *“What is something you think I*

could grow in that I might not see myself?" Then, listen humbly and thank them.

5. Share this message with someone.

GOD WANTS YOU TO TRAVEL

KEY TEXT: *Genesis 11:1-4 (KJV) – "[1] And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. [2] And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. [3] And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they had for morter. [4] And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."*

"Here they decided to build a city, and in it a tower of such stupendous height as should render it the wonder of the world. These enterprises were designed to prevent the people from scattering abroad in colonies. God had directed men to

disperse throughout the earth, to replenish and subdue it." – Patriarchs and Prophets, Page 119, Ellen G. White.

The people building the tower of Babel wanted to gather in one place. They did not want to go around the world. They acted contrary to God's will because God commanded man in Genesis 1:28 to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. The people of Babel did not want to fill the world. They wanted to be in one comfort zone.

God wants you to get out of your comfort zone and to interact more with His creation. Interacting more with God's creation shall increase your knowledge of the infinite One because different places have different things. When you go to Nairobi, Kenya, there is the Nairobi National Park. When you travel to Mombasa, Kenya or Seychelles, you will see the Indian Ocean. Once you journey to Dubai, you will view and probably encounter the Burj Khalifa and Burj Al Arab. When you go to France, there is the Eiffel Tower. In America and Canada, there is Niagara Falls. When you travel to Israel

or Palestine, you would be able to interact with many of the ancient things in the Bible.

God wants you to see all these things to understand Him better because He has hidden spiritual lessons in natural things. Jeremiah 12:5 (KJV) – "If thou hast run with the footmen and have wearied thee, how then canst thou contend with the horses?" That is a spiritual lesson represented by natural creatures (horses and men).

Isaiah 55:8-9 (KJV) – "[8] For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. [9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Comparing His ways and thoughts to ours, God uses the distance between heaven and earth. That is a spiritual lesson using examples in the natural world.

Isaiah 55:10-11 (KJV) – "[10] For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth

the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: [11] So shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." God uses the rain and snow, how they do not go back to the sky but fall to the ground, and compares it to His divine Word.

The Lord wants you to travel so that you can know Him more. There are lessons you can learn in Zimbabwe that you cannot learn in Kenya. You can learn lessons in Washington, D.C., unavailable in Johannesburg, South Africa.

When you look at Isaiah 55:10, which talks about the rain and snow, some countries, especially Africa and the Middle East, never experience snow. Therefore someone from these countries may not be able to fully comprehend that verse because there is no snow in their current location. However, when they travel to countries that have winters, like North America and Europe, they will get to experience snow.

Proverbs 28:1 (KJV) – "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." This verse compares the boldness of the righteous to that of the lion. When you are from America, Australia, and Europe, you may fail to fully understand this verse because there are no lions. However, you can fathom this truth better when you travel to Africa and India, visit national parks, and view lions in their natural habitat. Someone may argue that through technology, one can see all these on TV, via the internet, and can use virtual reality for touring the world. This is true, but the real-life experience is better than the virtual experience.

Different authors wrote the Bible from various locations; one author could have written it in one geographical area. God, who created the world, needed other people to have the privilege of writing the Bible.

When you have a private business company, God wants you to focus on the international market, not the local market only. God wants you to focus on the global audience when

you evangelize. Paul was always traveling from place to place. Jesus said to His disciples, "go ye therefore and teach all nations" Matthew 28:19. He would have told them to teach the Jews only, but He told them to teach all nations.

God is honored when you socialize and network with different people. He is honored when you move around and interact with His creation. Isaiah 45:18 says God created the world to be inhabited. By wanting to gather in one place and avoiding to replenish the world, the people of Babel were wasting God's resources. This is because if they had succeeded in remaining in one place (their comfort zone), the whole world would lie at waste. Being in your comfort zone is like swimming in the pools of mediocrity while God wants you to do your best.

Proverbs 4:7 (KJV) – "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." Wisdom is the application of truthful information. For one to apply truthful information, they must

apply the truthful information that they possess. One cannot apply what they don't know. Truthful Information acquired is also known as knowledge. Therefore, increasing knowledge is essential for increasing wisdom because applying what you don't know is impossible. However, one can acquire knowledge but fail to apply it. For example, one can choose to cook a particular vegetable (application of truthful information/wisdom) because they know it is edible (knowledge).

On the other hand, one may know that that particular vegetable is edible and good for health but choose not to eat it. These two people have the same knowledge, but how they apply is different. You cannot compare them to one who does not know. One who does not know if that vegetable is edible will not eat it (they won't apply the information). Therefore, knowledge is required because it is through its application that you can solve your life problems. This is because the

difference between you and the problem you face is knowledge.

What makes one person more successful than the other who has the same amount of knowledge is wisdom (how they choose to apply it). One person knows that the Bible says in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," but chooses not to go to Jesus. Another one knows the same thing and decides to go to Jesus. One person will study Software Development and choose to become a University lecturer, and there is one who will start a tech company, so their success levels will be different. But one without an idea about software will not get into the software business.

Therefore, to get wisdom, knowledge is essential. There are three ways that I know of that make one gain knowledge: traveling, socializing, and reading—the one who knows how to leverage these three ends up getting the most.

Travelling is essential because you get to learn more from a different environment. If you travel to the ghetto, you will see things, not in the affluent neighborhoods you live in. If you are from the ghetto, you see things in the leafy suburbs that are not present in your location. Therefore, moving from place to place is vital so you can learn more. You get to know more when you move from one location to another and socialize. When you combine reading, socializing, and traveling, you get to know more and better than one who does only one.

For example, one who has read the Bible and visited the mentioned places in the Bible and seen the mentioned things has better knowledge than one who has only read the Bible. If the two were to stand before people and preach and had the same measure of the Spirit, the former would probably have a more powerful message than the latter.

John the revelator wrote the great Bible book of Revelation while on the Isle of Patmos, a different location from where

he was born. In His ministry, Jesus constantly traveled. Daniel wrote the Book of Daniel in the kingdom of Babylon and not from Jerusalem, where he originated. The apostle Paul, who wrote almost half of the New Testament, kept traveling from place to place and acquired inspiration from various locations. Like Jesus, the apostle Paul also read and interacted widely with people.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (KJV) – “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren.” 1 Corinthians 10:1 (KJV) – “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant." God does not want you to be ignorant. He wants you to know and traveling is one way of acquiring knowledge.

Genesis 12:1-3 (KJV) – “[1] Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: [2] And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: [3] And

I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

For God to bless Abraham, he had to leave his original location and travel to a land God would show him. It was through Abraham that God would bless all families of the world. God intended for Abraham to bless the world, not just his current location.

Hebrews 11:8 says that Abraham obeyed God and went without knowing where he was going. Joseph was sold by his brothers in the land of Egypt as a slave and ended up prospering in that foreign land. That travel made various pagan people in Egypt (including Potiphar and Pharaoh) know that there is a God in heaven who is all-powerful.

Genesis 39:3 says that Potiphar saw that God was with Joseph. Genesis 41 talks about how Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream and gave solutions. Joseph was able to minister to Potiphar and Pharaoh because he traveled. One

of the reasons God wants you to travel is because He wants you to minister to everyone, both believers and unbelievers. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world." You can also read it to say, "For God so loved everybody."

Those who have gone for missions will testify that they experienced the hand of God more powerfully than they did in their current locations. Travelling can boost spiritual growth if done to the glory of God. On his way to Damascus, Paul encountered Christ (Acts 9). In other words, he met Christ while he was traveling.

Jesus appeared to two disciples on their way to Emmaus before He appeared to the others who gathered in a room (Luke 24:15-31). The two had the privilege of encountering the risen Christ before the others while traveling. Jesus called all His twelve apostles when they were outside their houses (Mark 3:13-19). Likewise, Jesus called them when He was outside His home. Get out of your home. Get out of your comfort zone. God wants you to travel.

“Those who in response to the call of the hour have entered the service of the Master Workman, may well study His methods of labor. During His earthly ministry, the Saviour took advantage of the opportunities to be found along the great thoroughfares of travel. It was at Capernaum that Jesus dwelt at the intervals of His journeys to and fro, and it came to be known as “His own city.” This city was well adapted to be the center of the Saviour's work. Being on the highway from Damascus to Jerusalem and Egypt, and to the Mediterranean Sea, it was a great thoroughfare of travel. People from many lands passed through the city, or tarried for rest on their journeyings to and fro. Here Jesus could meet all nations and all ranks, the rich and great, as well as the poor and lowly; and His lessons would be carried to other countries and into many households. Investigation of the prophecies would thus be excited; attention would be directed to the Saviour, and His mission would be brought

before the world.” — Testimonies for the Church 9:121, Ellen G. White.

International musicians and entertainers are more commercially successful than local ones because they have sold their content and done tours worldwide. Therefore, don't be confided in one place. Move from place to place so you can interact more with God's creation, serve more people, and spread the good message widely. God wants you to travel.

"*As I travel through this pilgrim land*
There is a friend who walks with me
Leads me safely through the sinking sand
It is the Christ of Calvary" - Jesus, Hold My Hand. Song by George Jones.

The Christian journey should be a literal journey.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM!

Prayer

Lord, open my heart to Your will and guide my steps beyond my comfort zone. Let me not build towers of self-security, but follow You to new places, new people, and deeper understanding. Show me where to travel to spread Your loving Word. As I move, may I grow in wisdom and be a blessing wherever You send me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

Plan a Purposeful Trip.

Before the end of the week, visit a new place you've never been before, even if it's just a nearby park, a museum, a town, or a local landmark. While you're there:

1. Observe God's creation around you.
2. Talk to at least one new person.

3. Ask God to show you one spiritual lesson through something you see, hear, or experience.

4. Write a short paragraph or record a 1-minute voice memo about what God revealed to you on that trip. That will become your "travel testimony."

5. Share this message with someone.

DECEMBER

A GENUINE CHRISTIAN CAN NEVER FAIL

KEY TEXT: *"But when we give ourselves wholly to God, and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to cooperate with One who knows no failure." – Messages to Young People, Page 309.3, Ellen G. White.*

A Genuine Christian can never fail because he is in corporation with God, the One who knows no failure. Such a person should surrender entirely to God and follow God's direction in their work. If they do that, God makes Himself responsible for accomplishing that person's vision. He

makes Himself responsible for the results of that work. Therefore, God is giving us an assurance to never think of failure when we do anything because He is a God who knows no defeat.

When your hands are in God's hands and your steps follow His path, success is not a possibility, it’s a promise. A life fully surrendered to the God who knows no failure will never walk alone, and will never walk in vain.

When we surrender every part of ourselves to God, there is no room left for doubt or fear of failure. For in the work that we do, He walks beside us, guides us, and takes full responsibility for the outcome. We may face challenges, setbacks, and moments of uncertainty, but with God as our partner, failure is never an option. The One who knows no defeat transforms our efforts into victories. He is the ultimate source of our strength and success, and in His hands, our endeavors are not just our own. They are part of His perfect plan, destined to accomplish great things for His glory.

In Genesis 1, on the creation account, He created everything excellently (Genesis 1:31) and in perfect order. Not once did He make a mistake and return to redo His work. God is a flawless God. As human beings, sin has made us imperfect. Hence, by our might, we can never make perfect decisions. God understands this, and so He wants us to collaborate with Him. When we liaise with Him, our imperfection sinks, and while we are joined with the Perfect One, we become perfect, and as a result, we do things perfectly. Therefore, God gives us the privilege to cooperate with Him and bids us to have faith that whatever we do will succeed because we are mingled with the One who knows no failure.

Deuteronomy 28:13 (KJV) – "And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them."

Deuteronomy 28:13 is one of the blessings God will give us when we obey His commandments. He promises us that we shall be the head and not the tail, and we shall be above only and not beneath. These expressions mean that we will always succeed and be at the top because we are in close contact with God, who is always at the top.

God desires that our thoughts and ways to be as high as heaven is from the earth. We can only achieve that if we diligently study and obey His word. No one is higher than God. Nothing is higher than God's Word. Studying God's Word, lifts our minds higher to grasp noble and infinite truth. If we obey God's instructions which are the highest in the universe, our lives will be at the highest levels, and when people see us, more of them will draw closer to Him. We cannot convert people, mainly because our lives as Christians do not give ideal examples of what a genuine Christian life should be.

Nothing in our character is exceptional and admirable. We behave like everyone else. We talk like everyone else. We think like everyone else. We do everything like everyone else while we are supposed to be the world's light (Matthew 5:14) and the world's salt (Matthew 5:13). One example is how the Sabbath commandment has been widely despised. Many professed Sabbath-keeping Christians have despised it too by doing what they should have done during the week on Sabbath. The Muslims have stood firm on their faith while grounded on their principles that some of us have found them to be so admirable and cool making us copy them sometimes. Numerous times, we see Christians dressing like Muslims and trying to do some things like them because of how unashamed and principled they are in their beliefs.

We never see extraordinary blessings in the lives of Christians like the ones promised in Deuteronomy 28:1-13 because Christians rarely live extraordinary lives. They do

almost everything as the world does, so their light can't shine bright in the dark because they are mingled with the darkness in the world. Don't expect to get extraordinary results in anything while you are doing the bare minimum because God is an excellent God. He tells us to do all things to His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Something done to the glory of God is never done poorly. Something done to the glory of God is done with maximum effort. Ecclesiastes 9:10 tells us that whatever our hand finds to do, we should do it with our might. Don't expect to sell a best-selling book while writing it in a rush so you can make money quickly. A person who cooperates with God gets new energy to do his best on the first day of the week. God has given him the energy while resting on the Sabbath.

John 15:5 (KJV) – "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing."

Once you cut off the branches from any tree, they cease to grow. Branches grow and develop as a result of being joined to the tree. The life that springs from the air, water, and sunshine that the tree receives from God is transferred to the branches. A branch cannot bear fruit on its own. The same applies to us. We cannot bear fruits on our own. We need to abide in God. God is our Creator (Genesis 2:7). He knows and understands us best.

God is our savior. He has purchased us with a hefty price (1 Corinthians 6:20). A price that no amount of money in the world can equal. Without Him, we can do nothing. We may try to do things without God, and He may allow us to do them for a while, but in the end, they will amount to nothing because the pleasures of sin last only for a season (Hebrews 11:25).

What benefits do we get when we abide by God?

John 15:7 (KJV) – “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

God promises us that our prayers will be answered if we abide in Him and His words abide in us. When God’s word abides in you, it will guide you on what to ask for in prayer, and whatever you ask, you will receive because God cannot go against His word.

What is the limit to your success when you cooperate with God?

Psalm 90:1-2 (KJV) – “[1] Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. [2] Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.”

God reigns from everlasting to everlasting, meaning He is infinite. This means that when you cooperate with Him, there is no limit to the heights you can reach because He is

limitless. He is a God that is not confined by limits and boundaries. The Bible says that the heavens cannot contain Him (1 Kings 8:27).

What about the various failures we face when we obey God?

Romans 8:28 (KJV) – "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

God promises that when we obey Him, all things will work out together for good. Each item may not be good, but everything combined will work out for good. When you do body exercises, the workout sessions may seem strenuous, but the results, in the end, are a healthy body, good shape, and physical fitness, among other benefits.

When diligently studying for a course in school, one may not always find the process enjoyable, but the results are good grades. Each thing may not be good, but all things will work

together for good for those who love God. Abraham, in his unselfishness, allowed Lot to choose which land he wanted to take. Lot chose the best place and left the dry areas to Abraham. God gave Abraham the whole land, including what was Lot's.

In the book Failing Forward by John C. Maxwell, he talks about Truett Cathy, the founder of the Chic-Fil-A fast food restaurant chain. Truett got that idea while he was in a hospital bed. Whatever situation you are in at the moment, no matter how bad it seems, is perfect. You will never fail if you don't lose your grip on God and continue trusting Him amid that situation. You may seem like you are failing, but you are not failing. You are only rising higher. For Jesus to feed the multitude of five thousand men with five loaves and two fish, he had to keep breaking the bread and the fish. The more he broke them, the more they multiplied. The multiplication came after the breaking. God may sometimes allow us to be broken to bring a huge blessing.

The people at the tower of Babel built it for a while, reaching a certain height but could not complete it because they were going against God, and God was not at the center of their plan. They might have built it for several years and made it to a level that seemed so high in the eyes of man. For a while, they thought they were succeeding. When other people saw them, they also thought they were succeeding. God caused their efforts to be fruitless by giving them many languages, and thus they got confused. God proved to them that without Him, they could do nothing.

The Bible tells us not to fret when we see evildoers succeeding (Psalm 37:7). God says this because He will render that ‘success’ fruitless. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 28:30 that a rebellious person to God’s commandments will build a house but will not dwell in it. It does not say that the wicked won't build a house. It says they will build it but not live in it for a sufficient time (time enough to satisfy themselves); other people will live in it.

Hebrews 11:24-25 (KJV) – "[24] By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; [25] Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;" Moses understood this. Therefore, he chose to suffer affliction with God's people than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. This is because affliction while doing God's will brings more incredible and ever-lasting blessings than the quick fixes of sin.

Hebrews 11:30 (KJV) – "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."

I can imagine the Israelites going around the walls of Jericho from the first day up to the sixth, and they still didn't fall. Then they went around it six times on the seventh day and it still didn't fall. Then they went around it the seventh time, then the walls finally fell. You will surely reach your destination when you embark on a journey with God. When

you put God in the midst of your process, you will surely accomplish your goal. YOU CAN NEVER FAIL.

1 Samuel 17:44-50 (KJV) – "[44] And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. [45] Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. [46] This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. [47] And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands. [48] And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the

Philistine. [49] And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. [50] So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. [51] Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled."

Without a sword and military attire, David defeated the giant Goliath with a sling and a stone. He hit him on the first attempt, and the mighty Philistine warrior with years of war experience fell dead. David did not do this out of his might. He did it because he cooperated with God.

Luke 1:37 (KJV) – "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

God is a God who makes the impossible possible. Let us learn to cooperate with Him.

How can you fail when you have the old testament, the new testament, Ellen G. White's books, among other Christian books, YouTube sermons, and Christian articles like this one?

Share it widely, but most importantly, study the Bible on your own.

GOD BLESS YOU, SHALOM UNTO YOU!

Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven,

I thank You because You are the God who knows no failure. You created all things perfectly, and You make no mistakes. Today, I surrender all my plans, goals, and dreams to You. I choose to cooperate with You in everything I do. Please

direct my steps, fill me with wisdom, and make me diligent and faithful. Help me to live a life that reflects Your excellence and glory. Teach me to trust You fully, even when results delay, knowing that with You, success is sure. I will not fear failure because I am walking with the One who never fails.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

1. Pick one task you're responsible for this week, it could be work-related, school-related, ministry-related, or even home-related.

2. Commit to doing that task with your full might, as if you're doing it for God (Ecclesiastes 9:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

3. Before you begin, pray and invite God to work through you.
4. As you do the task, avoid shortcuts. Be thorough. Be honest. Be kind. Be timely.
5. At the end, reflect on these questions:
    - Did I give my best for God?
    - Did I invite God's guidance and strength before/during the task?
    - How did cooperating with God make a difference?

Optional Bonus: Share your experience or testimony with someone else to encourage them to also aim for Godly excellence.

ALL THESE WORDS

KEY TEXT: *Exodus 20:1 (KJV) – "And God spake all these words, saying."*

Exodus 20 is the chapter of the Ten Commandments. God looked down the ages and saw a time when people would keep most commandments and disregard some commandments, such as the Sabbath commandment. Therefore, the Ten Commandments chapter had to start with this profound statement (Exodus 20:1). The verse doesn't say, "and God spake **some** of these words." It says, "and God spake **all** these words."

The ten commandments were spoken and written by God directly. No commandment is not important. All commandments were relevant to the New Testament as they were relevant to the old.

Here is a verse from the New Testament:

James 2:10 (KJV) – “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

Matthew 5:19 (KJV) – “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Deuteronomy 8:1 (KJV) – “All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers.”

We must keep all commandments that God has commanded us to do, and we must do them as He says and not according to our own opinions. That is not salvation by works. It is an expression of our love for God (John 14:15).

"Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, “This is the

love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3). "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him," (chap. 2:4). Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience." - Obedience, The Fruit of Faith, September 17, Ellen G. White.

"We do not earn salvation by our obedience, for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith. "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (chap. 3:5, 6). Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law. "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (verse 7). Righteousness is defined by the standard of God's holy

law, as expressed in the ten precepts given on Sinai." - Obedience, The Fruit of Faith, September 17, Ellen G. White.

God didn't whisper some, He thundered all. Exodus 20 doesn't say, 'And God spake a few good ideas.' It boldly declares, *'And God spake all these words.'* Every commandment was spoken by the same divine voice, written by the same eternal hand, and meant for the same enduring purpose. God's Word stands unshaken. When we treat God's law like a buffet, we dishonor the One who gave it. Obedience isn't about legalism, it's about loyalty. It's not just duty, it's love expressed in action. Partial obedience is still disobedience. So if you love Him, keep *all* His commandments, not just the convenient ones. God's voice echoes still: *All these words.* Not some. Not most. All.

May God give you the courage to live by every word that proceeds from His mouth.

GOD BLESS YOU!

Prayer

Dear God, Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the Ten Commandments and the blessings they carry. Please help me to take every commandment seriously, knowing that each one is a gift of love and guidance from You. Give me the strength to obey and to love You. Teach me to follow Your whole law with joy, and may my life reflect true faith through faithful obedience. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

1. **Read Exodus 20:1-17** slowly and prayerfully.
2. **Reflect** on each commandment one by one. Ask yourself:
    - Am I living by this word from God?

- Do I sometimes excuse or neglect any part of it?
- How can I obey it more fully out of love, not duty?

3. **Write a response prayer or commitment** next to each one. For example, beside the Sabbath commandment, you might write: “Lord, help me to honor Your Sabbath and enjoy this weekly time with You.”
4. **Bonus challenge:** Teach someone else what you’ve learned. As Jesus said, those who *do and teach* the commandments will be called great in His Kingdom (Matthew 5:19).
5. Share this message with someone.

THE SPIRIT BEHIND YOUR MUSIC

KEY TEXT: *1 Samuel 16:23 (KJV) - "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."*

In the above verse, David played music to drive an evil spirit out of Saul. Therefore, if there is a type of music that can be used to drive out evil spirits from someone, surely there is a type of music that we can use to drive evil spirits into someone.

Many evil attributes among young people and others can also be traced to the music they listen to, from drug addiction to lust to irreverence to sleeping in the church to atheism. Music contributes largely to most evil actions, especially in this modern age.

For example, you may commit your heart that you will never smoke marijuana (weed). Shortly after you start listening to Reggae music you begin feeling that there is nothing wrong with weed and when you start following the counsel of the ungodly (such as marijuana provides a cure for cancer), this behavior becomes paramount in your life.

Many people say Reggae has a message, but if you listen to a good number of them, they often highlight problems, offering no solution. Good examples are 'Tell me how come' and 'Nothing to smile about by Morgan Heritage. These songs will tell you all the problems faced in society and offer no solution in the end.

When you listen to Hip Hop Music, the music has a spirit of rebellion. It initiates a rebellious nature in your heart. When you listen to RnB, Blues, Soul, and the so-called love songs, they contribute feelings of sensuality in your heart, and these feelings slowly lead to lust. People are in unhealthy relationships because of music.

International Hip Hop musicians (especially the modern ones) display a type of life that is so unreal. Their songs show you how they spend their days engaging in drugs, sexual activities, and wasting money, while they don't really do that in reality. These people wake up very early and sleep so late working hard on their craft then they sell lies to us.

Over 90% of them are not gangsters as they portray themselves. That gangster narrative is a marketing and PR (Public Relations) strategy they use to bring bad influence to society. It is the same way that many Reggae artists show themselves as poor. In reality, they are not poor and suffering. It is the same way artists who sing love songs present themselves as super romantic, fully understanding love. In reality, many of them have broken relationships and have records of divorce.

I once met someone from New York City who lived in the Queens borough (Nas' neighborhood) and knew Nas the rapper personally. She used to work in a bookstore that Nas

frequently visited to rent books. I asked her how Nas was and if he was truly a gangster. She told me that he wasn't. She told me that Nas was an ambitious, self-driven youth who loved learning a lot and would go to the bookstore frequently to rent books.

In other words, these people are disciplined and organized to the core unlike what they portray themselves to be. They influence people to be what they are not. Without discipline and organization, you cannot cultivate talent and commercial success at international levels. They understand that many people want to get money easily for instant gratification, which is exactly what they sell. Most of the expensive clothes, jewelry, and cars they show in videos are sponsored by the respective companies.

Many youths who have tried actively practicing the type of things they hear and see in secular music have wasted their lives and thus been led to depression and, worst cases, death. Mental health, to a large degree, is a result of music.

Listening to music often puts your mind in another world far from reality.

When you listen to secular music, your mind is driven into unreal and ungodly fantasies. If this practice is carried out for a long time, the listener spends hours inside their imagination and starts perceiving them as real. This impacts their actions and as a result habits of indolence and procrastination among other evil ones are formed. Numerous young people who have become atheists have been propelled to it because they heard a musical artiste (this is common among Hip Hop artists) singing or saying in an interview they don't believe in God.

"Music has occupied the hours which should have been devoted to prayer. Music is the idol which many professed Sabbath-keeping Christians worship. Satan has no objection to music if he can make that a channel through which to gain access to the minds of the youth. Anything will suit his purpose that will divert the mind from God and engage the

time which should be devoted to His service. He works through the means which will exert the strongest influence to hold the largest numbers in a pleasing infatuation, while they are paralyzed by his power. When turned to good account, music is a blessing; but it is often made one of Satan’s most attractive agencies to ensnare souls. When abused, it leads the unconsecrated to pride, vanity, and folly. When allowed to take the place of devotion and prayer, it is a terrible curse." - Messages to Young People, Page 295, Paragraph 1, Ellen G. White.

Nowadays, numerous people are making videos of artists in the Illuminati, Freemasons, and all those cults. And since many youths have a deep-down urge to do what's right, they watch those videos to know who to listen to. After they find out that the video has listed some musical artists but has not listed a specific celebrity that they like, they tend to think that they are safe because that said artiste has not been listed. Those videos (videos telling you the successful people who

are in illuminati) usually lack credibility because they might be based on assumptions. Never should you use them as a benchmark on what music to listen to and what not to listen to. Also, avoid listening to such videos because they subconsciously start making you believe that all good things come from the devil, which is not true.

The benchmark of the music to listen to should be the Bible. 1 Corinthians 10:31 - "Whether therefore, you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." The keyword is whatsoever. The word whatsoever means everything, and that includes listening to music. Therefore, as you contemplate the music to listen to, ask yourself, if it glorifies God, and if it doesn't glorify God, it is dangerous to listen to.

Stop listening to secular music. This will make your mind clear and elevate your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (KJV) – “[8] For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. [9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

For your thoughts to be in line with God’s infinitely high thoughts, you have to fill your mind with infinitely high content which is the Word of God. Spend time studying God’s Word. Spend time listening to Godly music.

Genesis 1:26 (KJV) – “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." We were created in God's image, and God wants our minds to be as high as heaven.

GOD BLESS YOU!

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We come before You with humble hearts, acknowledging that You are the Creator of all things, including music. Lord, we ask that You guide our hearts and minds in the music we listen to, so that it may reflect Your truth, purity, and love. Help us to discern what is pleasing to You and to seek only that which draws us closer to You.

We recognize that music has the power to shape our thoughts, behaviors, and emotions, and we desire to fill our hearts with melodies that glorify Your name. Strengthen our resolve to reject anything that does not align with Your will, and fill us with Your peace. May our lives be a reflection of Your goodness, and may every note we hear draw us closer to Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity

1. **Music Reflection & Prayer Exercise:** Set aside 15-20 minutes to reflect on the music you've been listening to recently. As you do, pray for God's guidance in your choices. Ask Him to help you discern whether the music aligns with His will for your life. Write down any thoughts or feelings you have during this time. If you recognize any harmful influences, spend time in prayer, asking God to help you replace them with music that uplifts your spirit and honors Him. Consider listening to a worship song or Christian music that focuses on His love and greatness during this reflection.

2. **Create a Playlist of Uplifting Music:** Curate a playlist of music that promotes positive thoughts, encourages a Christ-centered lifestyle, and reflects the beauty and holiness of God. Include Christian

songs, hymns, and instrumental music that you can listen to when you need peace or spiritual refreshment. Make this playlist a go-to whenever you need to redirect your thoughts and fill your heart with music that glorifies God.

3. **Commit to Godly Music for One Week:** For the next week, challenge yourself to listen only to music that brings glory to God. Track how this shift affects your mood, thoughts, and daily actions. At the end of the week, reflect on how the change has impacted your life, and thank God for any positive transformation He has brought into your heart.

4. Ask God to give you the ability to only listen to music that glorifies Him

THE END

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

GOD BLESS YOU SUPERABUNDATLY, SHALOM!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Alex is a servant of God in his purpose. He is a Seventh Day Adventist evangelist through his ministry Get Truth Get Life: www.gettruthgetlife.com. He is also a Technology Professional and Mechatronical Engineer. He builds life-changing technological solutions in his technology firm Real Biz Digital.

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